

# **Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools**

**School Years 2020-21 and 2021-22**  
(July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022)

**Complying with Healthy Food Certification under  
Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes**

**April 2021**



Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

## **Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools**

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# About this Document

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) publication, *Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools*, provides detailed information on the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS), including implementation guidance and the rationale for development of each standard. The CNS is consistent with current science-based national nutrition recommendations and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Smart Snacks nutrition standards for competitive foods, which are defined by the final rule, *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School* (Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 146, July 29, 2016).

The standards in this document apply to school years 2020-21 and 2021-22, from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022. Schools that follow the CNS will exceed the USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

Each section of this guide contains links to other sections when appropriate, and to websites with relevant information and resources. These can be accessed by clicking on the blue text throughout the guide.

The mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA. Product names are used solely for clarification.

For additional information on the CNS, visit the CSDE's [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) and [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpages or contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at [susan.fiore@ct.gov](mailto:susan.fiore@ct.gov) or 860-807-2075.

Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

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- Amanda Aldred, RD, SNS, Nutrition Specialist, New England Dairy & Food Council
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- Madeleine Diker, SNS, Food Service Director, Cheshire Public Schools
- Teri Dandeneau, MS, RD, School Nutrition Programs Consultant, Connecticut State Department of Education\*
- Eileen Faustich, MS, CD-N, Food Service Director, Milford Public Schools \*
- Susan Fiore, MS, RD, (*Nutrition Standards Committee Chair*), Nutrition Education Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education \*
- Mary Ann Lopez, SNS, Consultant \*
- Susan Maffe, MS, RD, SNS, Food Service Director, Meriden Public Schools
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- Stephen Updegrove, MD, MPH, Pediatrician, School Medical Adviser, New Haven Public Schools (Retired) \*

\* Denotes individuals who served on the original committee to develop the Connecticut Nutrition Standards in 2006.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASP	Afterschool Snack Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	Connecticut General Statutes
CN	Child Nutrition
CNS	Connecticut Nutrition Standards
CNP	Child Nutrition Programs
CSDE	Connecticut State Department of Education
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
HFC	Healthy Food Certification
HHFKA	Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
IOM	Institute of Medicine, National Academies of Science (now known as the National Academy of Medicine)
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
PFS	product formulation statement
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SMP	Special Milk Program
SSO	Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture



# 1 — Introduction

[Section 10-215e](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) required the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to publish a set of nutrition standards by August 1, 2006, for all foods offered for sale to students at school separately from school meals that are reimbursable under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The CSDE developed the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) in July 2006, with input from a state nutrition standards committee that included representation from the following organizations:

- American Academy of Pediatrics (Hezekiah Beardsley Connecticut Chapter);
- American Heart Association;
- Connecticut Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics;
- Connecticut Action for Healthy Kids;
- School Nutrition Association of Connecticut;
- Connecticut State Department of Education;
- Connecticut State Department of Public Health;
- End Hunger Connecticut! Inc.;
- New England Dairy & Food Council; and
- University of Connecticut, Department of Nutritional Sciences.

For links to the state statutes, refer to “[Connecticut General Statutes](#)” in section 9.

## CNS Philosophy

The CNS promotes healthier choices for students in schools. The nutrients addressed in the CNS are based on current nutrition science and national health recommendations from the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The standards focus on:

- moderating calories;
- limiting total fat, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars;
- eliminating trans fat; and
- promoting increased consumption of nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, and legumes.

The CNS does not address nutrients or food ingredients that lack scientific consensus regarding negative health effects, and are therefore not currently addressed by national health recommendations. Some examples include high fructose corn syrup, food additives, and artificial

colors. However, the CSDE strongly encourages schools to read product labels and choose foods without these types of ingredients. In general, products with fewer ingredients are healthier choices. The CSDE's Better Choice Recommendations assist schools with identifying products that do not contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to "[Better Choice Recommendations](#)" in this section.

### Fortification and Supplementation

The CNS promotes the consumption of needed nutrients through naturally nutrient-rich healthy food choices, not through fortified products that would otherwise have little nutritional value. Naturally nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, and legumes provide substantial amounts of naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients with relatively few calories. Foods and beverages that are not nutrient rich supply calories, but relatively small amounts of nutrients (and sometimes none at all), unless fortified. Examples of products that are not naturally nutrient rich include "energy" bars and baked goods (e.g., doughnuts and muffins) fortified with multiple vitamins, minerals, and nutrition supplements.

The CNS does not allow any significantly fortified products for use in schools unless they are naturally nutrient-rich products that are fortified with nutrients at levels based on scientifically documented health needs, such as:

- milk fortified with vitamins A and D;
- breakfast cereals fortified with iron;
- orange juice fortified with calcium,
- soy beverages fortified with calcium; and
- grain products fortified with folic acid.

A basic premise of the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is that Americans should meet their nutrient needs primarily by consuming nutrient-rich foods. Fortified foods and beverages are advantageous only if they provide additional sources of certain nutrients that might otherwise be present only in low amounts in some food sources provide nutrients in highly bioavailable forms or address a documented public health need. Manufacturers often fortify nutrient-poor foods and beverages with a variety of vitamins and minerals that do not meet any of these criteria. These products do not provide the same health benefits as naturally nutrient-rich foods that contain these nutrients.

Significantly fortified foods and beverages could possibly lead to a nutrient excess with toxic effects, if students are consuming too much of a product or consuming multiple sources of different fortified products. Currently, there are no scientifically documented health needs or recommendations for children to have additional fortification of nutrients through these types of products.

The CNS does not approve food or beverage products that contain nutrition supplements such as amino acids (e.g., taurine, glutamine, lysine, and arginine), extracts (e.g., green tea extract and gotu kola extract), and herbs or other botanicals (e.g., ginseng and ginkgo biloba). Their efficacy and safety for consumption by children is not well known, and some nutrition supplements may have harmful side effects.

Without scientific proof of established health benefit and certification of safety for use with children by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and national health organizations, products that are significantly fortified or contain nutrition supplements do not merit inclusion on the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage, regardless of whether their nutrient content complies with the CNS or the state beverage statute.

## Revision Requirements

C.G.S. [Section 10-215e](#) requires the CSDE to publish the state nutrition standards by January 1 of each year, to be effective for the next school year (July 1 through June 30). Nutrition science is continually evolving. The CSDE annually reconvenes the state nutrition standards committee to evaluate and revise the CNS as needed, based on changes in nutrition science, national health recommendations, and federal regulations. The most current version of the CNS is available on the CSDE's [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

## Rationale for Current Revisions

The state nutrition standards committee did not make any changes to the CNS for school years 2020-21 or 2021-22 because the current national health recommendations for nutrients of concern have not changed. The recommended limits for added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium in the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (released in December 2020) are the same as the recommendations in the previous 2015-2020 edition. The USDA's Smart Snacks nutrition standards have not changed since the publication of the USDA's Smart Snacks final rule on July 29, 2016.

### 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines provides four overarching guidelines that encourage healthy eating patterns at each stage of life and recognize that individuals will need to make shifts in their food and beverage choices to achieve a healthy pattern.

1. **Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.** At every life stage—infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, pregnancy, lactation, and older adulthood—it is never too early or too late to eat healthfully.

- For about the first 6 months of life, exclusively feed infants human milk. Continue to feed infants human milk through at least the first year of life, and longer if desired. Feed infants iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life when human milk is unavailable. Provide infants with supplemental vitamin D beginning soon after birth.
  - At about 6 months, introduce infants to nutrient-dense complementary foods. Introduce infants to potentially allergenic foods along with other complementary foods. Encourage infants and toddlers to consume a variety of foods from all food groups. Include foods rich in iron and zinc, particularly for infants fed human milk.
  - From 12 months through older adulthood, follow a healthy dietary pattern across the lifespan to meet nutrient needs, help achieve a healthy body weight, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
2. **Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.** A healthy dietary pattern can benefit all individuals regardless of age, race, or ethnicity, or current health status. The Dietary Guidelines provides a framework intended to be customized to individual needs and preferences, as well as the foodways of the diverse cultures in the United States.
3. **Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits.** An underlying premise of the Dietary Guidelines is that nutritional needs should be met primarily from foods and beverages—specifically, nutrient-dense foods and beverages. Nutrient-dense foods provide vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. A healthy dietary pattern consists of nutrient-dense forms of foods and beverages across all food groups, in recommended amounts, and within calorie limits.

The core elements that make up a healthy dietary pattern include:

- Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables
- Fruits, especially whole fruit
- Grains, at least half of which are whole grain
- Dairy, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages and yogurt as alternatives
- Protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products
- Oils, including vegetable oils and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts



4. **Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.** At every life stage, meeting food group recommendations—even with nutrient-dense choices—requires most of a person’s daily calorie needs and sodium limits. A healthy dietary pattern does not have much room for extra added sugars, saturated fat, or sodium—or for alcoholic beverages. A small amount of added sugars, saturated fat, or sodium can be added to nutrient-dense foods and beverages to help meet food group recommendations, but foods and beverages high in these components should be limited. Limits are:
  - Added sugars: Less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2. Avoid foods and beverages with added sugars for those younger than age 2.
  - Saturated fat: Less than 10 percent of calories per day starting at age 2.
  - Sodium: Less than 2,300 milligrams per day—and even less for children younger than age 14.
  - Alcoholic beverages: Adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting intake to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less in a day for women, when alcohol is consumed. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. There are some adults who should not drink alcohol, such as women who are pregnant.

## USDA’s Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards

The USDA’s Smart Snacks nutrition standards for competitive foods took effect on July 1, 2014. The final rule provisions took effect on September 27, 2016. Smart Snacks applies to all competitive foods sold on school campus during the school day in public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP and SBP.

Effective with school year 2014-15, the state nutrition standards committee revised the CNS to align with Smart Snacks, except when doing so would weaken the integrity of the current CNS or be inconsistent with state statutes.

Effective with school year 2017-18, the state nutrition standards committee made two revisions to the CNS to reflect changes in the Smart Snacks final rule.

1. Exemptions for general standards: The committee changed the exemption for canned vegetables from “Canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes to maintain the quality and structure of the vegetable are exempt from all nutrient standards” to “Low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.”
2. Exemptions for total fat and saturated fat: The committee added an exemption for whole eggs with no added fat.

These changes did not weaken the integrity of the current CNS and are consistent with state statutes.

The Smart Snacks standards for foods are less restrictive than the CNS in several areas. For a comparison of the federal and state nutrition standards, review the CSDE's comparison chart, [Comparison of the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and the USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#).

### Allowable Foods

Commercial food products and foods made from scratch must comply with the CNS when they are available for sale to students on school premises, separately from reimbursable meals; or offered in reimbursable ASP snacks. Noncompliant foods cannot be sold to students on school premises unless the sales meet the food exemption criteria of the state HFC statute. For more information, see "[Food exemptions](#)" in this section.

The CNS applies to the amount of the food **as served**, including any added accompaniments such as butter, margarine, cream cheese, jelly, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, relish, salad dressing, sauce, and gravy. When a food includes an accompaniment (such as a bagel with cream cheese or pancakes with syrup), the nutrition information for both items must be added together prior to reviewing the serving for CNS compliance.

### Evaluating commercial products

The serving of a commercial product (including any added accompaniments) must meet each nutrition standard for the applicable CNS food category. The CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage identifies commercial food products that comply with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#)" in this section and review the CSDE's resource, [How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the CNS](#).

### Evaluating foods made from scratch

The serving of a recipe (including any added accompaniments) must meet each nutrition standard for the applicable CNS food category. Entities that sell foods made from scratch must complete the two steps below to provide documentation of each recipe's CNS compliance **before** selling these foods to students. Maintain this information on file for the CSDE's annual HFC documentation review.

1. **Standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving:** *This step is required to determine the recipe's nutrition information per serving.* Foods made from scratch must have a standardized recipe indicating the calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and sugars per serving. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and

retrieved several times for use by a given foodservice operation; and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized **quantity** recipes produce 25 or more servings. For guidance on developing and using standardized recipes, visit the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

- If the recipe does not include nutrition information or is missing nutrients, the selling entity must conduct a nutrient analysis to determine the recipe's nutrition information per serving. The nutrient analysis can be conducted with a nutrient analysis software program, or a nutrient analysis database and the CSDE’s [CNS Worksheet 9: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes](#).
  - If the recipe is missing nutrition information for sugars, calculate this information using [CNS Worksheet 10: Evaluating Recipes for Sugars](#).
2. **Completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category:** *This step is required to determine if the recipe’s serving complies with the CNS.* Enter the recipe’s nutrition information per serving from step 1 (including any added accompaniments) into the appropriate CSDE worksheet for the CNS food category. The CNS worksheets are available in the “[CNS Worksheets](#)” section of the CSDE’s CNS webpage.

Entities that sell foods made from scratch to students must complete these documentation requirements for all foods made from scratch. This includes the two food categories below.

- **Category 1: Foods prepared from scratch using a recipe:** Examples include entrees sold only a la carte (not as part of reimbursable NSLP and SBP meals) such as pizza, chef’s salad, and lasagna; soups; cooked grains such as rice or pasta with added salt and fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter); cooked vegetables with added salt and fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter); salad with dressing; fruit smoothies; and baked goods such as muffins and cookies.

Recipes and nutrition information are **not** required for entrees sold a la carte during the **same meal service on the same day** that they are planned and served as part of reimbursable meals. These entrees are exempt from the CNS and may be sold a la carte during the meal service if they: 1) are the same or smaller portion size as the NSLP and SBP; 2) have the same accompaniments; 3) meet the trans fat standard; and 4) do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, or chemically altered fat substitutes. **Note:** This exemption applies only to the **three categories of main dish entree items** defined by the CNS. Any other meal components sold separately from reimbursable meals must comply with the applicable CNS food category. For example, muffins that are part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless they comply with the CNS snacks category; and french fries that are part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless comply with the CNS fruits and vegetables category. For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, [Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#).

- Category 2: Foods with other ingredients added after purchasing:** Examples include popping popcorn kernels in oil; assembling a sandwich; making muffins from a mix and adding butter and eggs; adding butter to rice and pasta; adding dressing to salad; and adding sprinkles to commercial frozen cookie dough. The selling entity must create a recipe for these foods based on the specific amount of each ingredient, and conduct a nutrient analysis to determine the nutrition information per serving.



For more information on evaluating recipes for CNS compliance, review the CSDE’s resources, [Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the CNS](#) and [How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS](#), and visit the “How To” section of the CSDE’s CNS webpage.

## List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages

The CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes brand-specific lists of commercial food products that meet the CNS and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute (C.G.S. Section 10-221q). This list assists school districts with identifying foods and beverages that comply with the state requirements. Products on this list also meet the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards.

The CSDE strongly recommends that districts use the List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages webpage to identify products that comply with the state statutes for foods and beverages. This helps districts meet all state requirements and provide the necessary documentation to the CSDE to

demonstrate compliance with the state statutes. Due to the often-complicated process of evaluating purchased foods for compliance with the CNS, the CSDE strongly encourages schools to submit food products to the CSDE for review, instead of evaluating them locally. For more information, refer to “[Information needed for product evaluation](#)” in this section.

The CSDE regularly updates the lists to include new products and remove discontinued products. Connecticut school nutrition programs receive e-mail notifications when updates are made.

## Providing naturally nutrient-rich foods and beverages

The CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes only packaged convenience food and beverage items. Minimally processed naturally nutrient-rich foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables will always meet the CNS, but are not included in the CSDE’s list unless they are individually packaged.

It is important to note that foods that comply with the CNS can vary greatly in their nutritional content. While the foods on the CSDE’s list are healthier alternatives to traditional snack foods, they are not necessarily the best choices nutritionally. For example, baked chips are better than regular chips because they are lower in fat, but they still do not provide any significant nutritional value.

Many processed products that meet the standards for fat, sugars, and sodium still lack the naturally occurring variety of nutrients found in whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, and whole grains. For example:

- granola bars made with 50 percent whole grains and 50 percent enriched grains are lower in fiber and nutrients than granola bars made with 100 percent whole grains;
- 100 percent fruit juice does not contain the fiber, vitamins, and minerals found in whole fruits; and
- oven-baked french fries provides less fiber, fewer nutrients, and more calories than baked potatoes.



Schools can use the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage to identify packaged convenience products that are healthier choices, such as whole-grain snacks that are naturally high in fiber and nutrients. The “[Better Choice Recommendations](#)” also assist schools in choosing healthier products.

The CSDE strongly encourages schools to ensure that a la carte food choices include a variety of minimally processed and whole foods that are naturally nutrient rich, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, and legumes. This provides an optimal selection of healthy food choices for students.

### Better Choice Recommendations

The Better Choice Recommendations are additional recommendations beyond the specific requirements of the CNS. They are not required, but help schools to identify foods that are even better choices. Foods that meet these recommendations are often less processed, and contain fewer ingredients.

The Better Choice Recommendations vary depending on the food category, but generally include the following:

- no artificial flavors or colors;
- no high fructose corn syrup;
- at least 2.5 grams of fiber (a “good” source of fiber as defined by the FDA); and
- 100 percent whole grain (applicable only to products containing grains).

The CSDE strongly encourages schools to choose foods that meet these recommendations. The Better Choice Recommendations are included in the green and white columns on the right side of each list on the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

### Information needed for product evaluation

The CSDE reviews commercial products for compliance with the CNS. Schools and manufacturers can submit product information at any time. Required information includes:

- name of manufacturer, exactly as it appears on the product label;
- name of product, exactly as it appears on the product label;
- flavor or variety of product, exactly as it appears on the product label;
- nutrition facts label, which must include the following nutrients: calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars, sodium, and fiber;
- list of ingredients, which must be in a format that can be electronically copied. please check the pdf before submitting to ensure that the text can be copied;
- actual package size, which must list both individual serving size and actual package size. for frozen desserts, the serving size must include both volume (fluid ounces) and weight (ounces or grams) of one serving of the product; and
- UPC code for the individual package (12-digit code, i.e., 0-00000-00000-0) and case (14-digit code, i.e., 000-00000-00000-0) or the manufacturer product code if the product does not have a UPC code.

For frozen dessert products such as ice cream and frozen yogurt, the serving size information must list the weight equivalent (grams) in addition to the serving size volume. Product weight is required to determine if the product complies with the standard for percentage of total sugars by weight. For

more information on submitting products to the CSDE, review the CSDE’s resource, [Submitting Food and Beverage Products for Approval](#).

## Healthy Food Certification

Effective July 1, 2006, C.G.S. [Section 10-215f](#) requires that each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the NSLP must certify annually to the CSDE whether they will comply with the CNS for all foods sold to students on school premises separately from reimbursable school meals. The CNS applies to all competitive foods offered for sale to students at all times, in all schools, and from all sources, such as cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers.

- “Sales” means the exchange of a determined amount of money or its equivalent (such as coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items) for foods and beverages. Sales also include programs and activities that charge a fee that includes the cost of foods provided to students, and activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages.
- “School premises” include all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system (Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS)), or the governing authority district or school.

HFC public schools receive additional funding based on the total number of reimbursable lunches served in the district in the prior school year.

Table 1-1 shows examples of potential sources of food and beverage sales to students in HFC public schools. This list is not all-inclusive.





**Table 1-1. Potential sources of food and beverage sales in HFC public schools <sup>1, 2</sup>**

- Adult education programs operated by the board of education
- Afterschool programs and activities, such as enrichment programs, extracurricular classes, tutoring sessions, and student clubs
- Cafeteria a la carte sales
- Classroom parties and other celebrations
- Clubs and organizations
- Concession stands
- Culinary arts programs
- Family and consumer sciences classes
- Family resource centers
- Fundraisers conducted by school groups and non-school groups
- Programs and meetings
- Recipient schools under interschool agreements
- School stores, kiosks, and other school-based enterprises
- Sports competitions, such as games, matches, and tournaments
- Sports programs
- Summer school programs (e.g., enrichment or exploratory) operated by the board of education or school governing authority
- USDA’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
- USDA’s Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP
- USDA’s Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) operated by the board of education on school premises
- Vending machines
- Vendors on school premises, e.g., food service management companies (FSMCs), food trucks, caterers, online and mobile food delivery companies, and other outside entities that sell foods and beverages to students
- Any other programs, organizations, and activities selling or giving foods and beverages to students on school premises

<sup>1</sup> The CNS applies to all foods sold to students on school premises separately from reimbursable meals, except for sales that meet the exemption criteria. The CNS does not apply to foods given to students free of any charge or contribution.

<sup>2</sup> The state beverage statute (G.C.S. Section 10-221q) applies to all beverages sold to students (as part of and separately from reimbursable meals) on school premises in public schools (HFC and non-HFC) at all times, except for sales that meet the exemption criteria. The state beverage statute does not apply to beverages given to students free of any charge or contribution. For more information, refer to “[Beverage Requirements for Public Schools](#)” in this section.



## Food exemptions

Foods that do not comply with the CNS could be sold to students on school premises if the board of education or school governing authority has voted to allow food exemptions as part of the annual HFC Statement, and: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the foods are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

- An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. Events involve a gathering of people in a social context, such as sports competitions, awards banquets, school concerts, and theatrical productions. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. Table 1-2 shows additional examples of events.
- The “school day” is the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. For example, if school ends at 3:00 p.m., the school day is from midnight to 3:30 p.m. Summer school programs operated by the board of education or school governing authority on school premises are part of the regular school day.
- “Location” means where the event is being held. For example, cupcakes may be sold to students on the side of the soccer field during a soccer game, but cannot be sold to students in the school cafeteria while a soccer game is played on the soccer field.

For example, if the district votes to allow food exemptions and school ends at 3:00 p.m., foods that do not comply with the CNS could be sold at the location of an event held on school premises anytime from 3:31 p.m. through 11:59 p.m. **Note:** If the event occurs while any CNPs are operating, Section 10-215b-1 of the state competitive foods regulations has stricter requirements. Section 10-215b-1 prohibits selling and giving candy to students anywhere on school premises (including events that meet the exemption criteria of the state HFC statute and state beverage statute) from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any CNPs, including during and after the school day. For example, if the ASP operates from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., an event on school premises cannot sell or give candy to students from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. For guidance on the state competitive foods regulations, review the CSDE’s resource, [Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#), and the CSDE’s publication, [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#)

The vote to allow food exemptions is part of the annual HFC Statement (Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)) that public school sponsors of the NSLP must submit to the CSDE by July 1 of each year. The annual HFC Statement is completed online in the CSDE’s Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System), as part of the NSLP sponsor’s yearly application for the CNPs. Sponsors must upload the meeting minutes that indicate the results of the board of education or school governing authority’s HFC votes for the

healthy food option and food exemptions. For more information on food exemptions, review the CSDE’s resource, [Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools](#). For more information on the HFC application process, visit the “[Apply](#)” section of the CSDE’s HFC webpage.

**Note:** Beverage exemptions are not part of the annual HFC Statement. The exemption section of the HFC Statement applies only to foods. If the district chooses to allow beverage exemptions, the board of education or school governing authority must vote separately. For more information, refer to “[Beverage exemptions](#)” in this section.

**Table 1-2. Examples of events for food and beverage exemptions <sup>1</sup>**

- Awards banquets
- Boy Scout Blue & Gold dinner
- Craft fairs
- Debate team competitions
- Election day (if school is not in session)
- Family bingo nights
- Math team competitions
- Mock trial competitions
- School carnivals
- School concerts
- School recitals
- School dances
- School fairs, e.g., health, science, and math
- Silent auctions
- Sports banquets
- Sports games, tournaments, and matches, e.g., basketball, football, soccer, tennis, field hockey, volleyball, and cross country
- Talent shows
- Theatrical productions

<sup>1</sup> This list is not all-inclusive. For questions regarding whether specific district fundraising activities meet the definition of “event,” contact the CSDE.

The CSDE’s publication, [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#), provides comprehensive information and guidance on complying with HFC and other state and federal laws for competitive

foods. For more information and resources on implementing the CNS and HFC, review the list of resources in [section 9](#) and visit the CSDE’s [CNS](#) and [HFC](#) webpages.

## Beverage Requirements for Public Schools

Public schools must comply with the state beverage statute ([C.G.S. Section 10-221q](#)) and the USDA’s Smart Snacks beverage standards. Some of the Smart Snacks beverage standards are stricter than the standards of the state beverage statute, and some standards of the state beverage statute are stricter than the Smart Snacks beverage standards. All beverages sold to students on school premises must comply with the stricter requirement of each federal and state beverage standard.

The Smart Snacks beverage standards apply only to beverages sold to students separately from school meals during the school day. The state beverage statute applies to all beverages sold to students (as part of reimbursable meals and separately from reimbursable meals) on school premises at all times, unless the sales meet specific exemption criteria. Sources of beverage sales include, but are not limited to, cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers. For additional examples, refer to [table 1-1](#).

- “Sales” means the exchange of a determined amount of money or its equivalent (such as coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items) for beverages. Sales also include programs and activities that charge a fee that includes the cost of beverages provided to students, and activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for beverages. For more information, refer to [“Sales to Students”](#) and [“Food Rewards”](#) in section 2. **Note:** The Smart Snacks beverage standards apply only to purchased coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items; but not when these items are given to students.
- “School premises” include all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system (CTECS), or the governing authority district or school.

For information on the specific beverage requirements, review the CSDE’s resources, [Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools](#) and [Beverage Requirements for Connecticut Public Schools](#) (presentation). For additional resources, visit the CSDE’s [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage. **Note:** The beverage requirements in these CSDE resources include the stricter requirements of the state beverage statute and the USDA Smart Snacks beverage standards.

### Allowable beverages

The state beverage statute allows public schools to sell only five categories of beverages to students. Table 1-3 summarizes the beverage requirements for public schools, which include the Smart Snacks beverage standards and any stricter requirements of the state beverage statute. The CSDE’s [List of](#)

[Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage includes brand-specific beverages that comply with all federal and state beverage requirements.

The state beverage requirements of C.G.S. Section 10-221q apply to:

- all beverages offered for sale to students on school premises at all times, in all schools, and from all sources, such as cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers;
- beverages sold as part of school meals and beverages sold separately from school meals; and
- all public schools regardless of whether they choose the healthy food option of HFC under Section 10-215f or participate in the USDA’s school nutrition programs. Beverages must also comply with any stricter provisions of the Smart Snacks beverage standards.

**Table 1-3. Beverages allowed by C.G.S. Section 10-221q and Smart Snacks <sup>1</sup>**

- **Milk**, low-fat (1%) and nonfat, flavored or unflavored, with no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce and no artificial sweeteners. <sup>2</sup>
- **Nondairy milk substitutes** such as soy milk (flavored or unflavored) that comply with the USDA’s nutrition standards for nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives; and contain no artificial sweeteners, no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, no more than 35 percent of calories from fat, and no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat. <sup>2, 3</sup>
- **100 percent juice** (fruit, vegetable, or combination), containing no added sweeteners. <sup>2</sup>
- **Beverages that contain only water and fruit or vegetable juice** with no added sweeteners, that meet the requirements specified in the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Beverages Containing Water and Juice](#). <sup>2</sup>
- **Water** (plain or carbonated), which may be flavored but contains no added sweeteners or caffeine. <sup>2</sup> Water sold to students in elementary and middle schools must be unflavored. Water sold to students in high schools may be flavored or unflavored.

Portion sizes cannot exceed 8 fluid ounces for elementary schools and 12 fluid ounces for middle and high schools, except for water, which is unlimited.

<sup>1</sup> These standards include the stricter requirements of the Smart Snacks beverage standards and the state beverage statute.

<sup>2</sup> Sweeteners include nutritive (caloric) sweeteners (e.g., sugar, sucrose, honey, fruit juice concentrate, and high fructose corn syrup) and nonnutritive sweeteners without calories. Nonnutritive sweeteners include artificial sweeteners (e.g., acesulfame potassium, aspartame, and sucralose), “natural” sweeteners such as stevia (e.g., Rebiana, Reb A, Truvia, PureVia, and SweetLeaf), and sugar alcohols (e.g., sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, and erythritol).

<sup>3</sup> For information on the USDA’s nutrition standards for nondairy milk substitutes, review the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).

## Beverage exemptions

Beverages that do not comply with the state beverage statute cannot be sold to students in public schools unless the local board of education or school governing authority votes to allow exemptions, and: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

- An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. Events involve a gathering of people in a social context, such as sports competitions, awards banquets, school concerts, and theatrical productions. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. [Table 1-2](#) shows additional examples of events.
- The “school day” is the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. For example, if school ends at 3:00 p.m., the school day is from midnight to 3:30 p.m. Summer school programs operated by the board of education or school governing authority on school premises are part of the regular school day.
- “Location” means where the event is being held. For example, lemonade may be sold to students at the baseball field during a baseball game, but cannot be sold to students in the school cafeteria while a baseball game is played on the baseball field.

For example, if the district votes to allow beverage exemptions and school ends at 3:00 p.m., beverages that do not comply with the state beverage statute could be sold at the location of an event held on school premises anytime from 3:31 p.m. through 11:59 p.m.

**Note:** If the event occurs while any CNPs are operating, Section 10-215b-1 of the state competitive foods regulations supersedes the exemptions allowed by the state beverage statute for sales of coffee, tea, and soft drinks at events. Section 10-215b-1 prohibits selling and giving coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students anywhere on school premises (including events that meet the exemption criteria of the state HFC statute and state beverage statute) from 30 minutes before up through 30 minutes after the operation of any CNPs, including during and after the school day. For example, if the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) operates from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., an event on school premises cannot sell or give coffee, tea, and soft drinks to students from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, review the CSDE’s resources, [Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations](#) and [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#).

Beverage exemptions are not part of the annual HFC Statement (Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)), which is required for all public schools that participate in the NSLP. The exemption section of the HFC Statement applies only to foods. The board of education or school governing authority must vote separately to allow any sales of noncompliant beverages to students in public schools. If the vote does not occur, schools cannot sell noncompliant beverages to students on school premise at any time.

Documentation of the approved vote for beverage exemptions must be available in the board of education or school governing authority's meeting minutes. Alternatively, beverage exemptions may be incorporated into the LEA's policy, e.g., school wellness policy. For more information on beverage exemptions, review the CSDE's resource, [Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools](#).

For more information on the state beverage requirements, review the CSDE's resources, [Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Schools](#) and [Beverage Requirements for Connecticut Public Schools](#), and visit the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage. For additional resources, refer to [section 9](#).

### Buy American Provision

All foods sold in the USDA's school nutrition programs must comply with the Buy American Provision under the federal regulations for the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210.21 (d)) and the School Breakfast Program (7CFR 220.16 (d)). This provision requires that schools purchase domestically grown and processed foods to the maximum extent possible. Schools must ensure that all foods purchased using funds from the nonprofit school food service account comply with the Buy American provision, including competitive foods and beverages sold a la carte. For more information, review [USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP](#).

## Other Requirements

In addition to the state HFC statute and beverage statute, HFC public schools must comply with the following federal and state requirements:

- Connecticut’s statute requiring the sale of nutritious and low-fat foods ([C.G.S. Section 10-221p](#));
- Connecticut’s competitive foods regulations ([Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23 of Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies](#));
- the local educational agency’s (LEA) school wellness policy, as required by the USDA’s school wellness policy legislation ([Section 4 of Public Law 108-265](#) and the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#)); and
- the USDA’s regulation for revenue from nonprogram foods ([7 CFR 210.14 \(f\)](#))

For guidance on these requirements, review the CSDE’s resources, [Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#) and [Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#). The CSDE’s [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#) provides detailed guidance on the requirements for competitive foods in HFC public schools.





## 2 — General Standards for All Foods

The CNS categories of competitive foods include:

- snacks;
- entrees sold only a la carte;
- non-entree combination foods;
- fruits and vegetables;
- cooked grains; and
- soups.

To be allowed for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals, a competitive food item must meet at least one of the three general standards (refer to [table 2-2](#)), and all of the nutrient standards for the specific food category to which it belongs, e.g., calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, sodium, and caffeine.

Some food categories have exemptions from the fat or sugar standards for certain nutrient-rich food items that are naturally higher in fat (such as nuts and seeds) or sugars (such as dried fruit). These foods are listed in the “Exemptions” column of each food category. All fruits and vegetables without added fat, sugar, and salt are exempt from the CNS.



Foods must be evaluated for compliance with the CNS based on the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, cream cheese, syrup, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in this section.

Two categories of foods and beverages are not allowed regardless of whether their nutrient content meets the CNS or the state statute for beverages. These include:

- significantly fortified products except for naturally nutrient-rich foods fortified with nutrients at levels based on scientifically documented health needs, e.g., milk fortified with vitamins A and D, breakfast cereals fortified with iron, orange juice fortified with calcium, and grain products fortified with folic acid; and
- products containing nutrition supplements, e.g., amino acids, extracts, herbs, or other botanicals.

For more information, refer to “[Fortification and Supplementation](#)” in section 1.

### Portion Size

Schools purchase and prepare foods in a variety of serving or package sizes such as individual packages, single-serve portions, and quantity recipes portioned into individual servings. Regardless of how foods are packaged or prepared, they must be evaluated for compliance with the CNS based on the amount of the item as served. The individual serving size or package cannot exceed 480 calories for entrees or 200 calories for the other five food categories (snacks, non-entree combination foods, fruits and vegetables, cooked grains, and soups).

If the package contains multiple servings, the standards apply to the nutrition information for the entire package. The nutrition information for the entire package is determined by multiplying the nutrients per serving (e.g., calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugars, and sodium) by the number of servings in the package. For example, if a snack product contains 150 calories per serving and the package contains two servings, the entire package contains 300 calories. This product does not comply with the CNS because snack foods cannot contain more than 200 calories.

### Volume versus weight

It is important to note that serving size volume and weight are not the same. “Ounces” are a measure of weight and “fluid ounces” are a measure of volume. While these terms are often used interchangeably, a measure of volume does not equate to the same measure of weight. One cup equals 8 fluid ounces (volume) but it does not necessarily weigh 8 ounces. The equivalent weight of a volume measure of any food varies depending on the density of the item being measured. For example, 1 cup of pudding or baked beans weighs more than 1 cup of puffed wheat cereal.



## Accompaniments

The CNS applies to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, margarine, oil, cream cheese, jelly, jam, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, relish, salad dressing, dipping sauces, sauces, and gravy. When a food item includes an accompaniment (such as a bagel with cream cheese), the nutrition information for both items must be added together when reviewing the item for compliance with the CNS.

Many accompaniments are high in fats, sugars, and sodium; and contain few, if any, nutrients. Schools must consider how accompaniments affect the nutrient profile of the food item. To limit negative impact, schools can compare brands and purchase products that are lowest in fat, sugars, and sodium; and use portion control measures such as portion control (PC) packets. Table 2-1 shows examples of some accompaniments typically served with foods in each CNS category.

**Table 2-1. Examples of accompaniments served with foods in the CNS categories <sup>1</sup>**

### Entree sold only a la carte

- Chicken nuggets with dipping sauce
- Hamburger or hotdog with ketchup, mustard and relish
- Meatloaf with gravy
- Quesadilla with spicy salsa
- Stir-fry chicken and vegetables with duck sauce
- Tacos with taco sauce
- Whole grain-rich (WGR) pasta and meat sauce with grated cheese

### Non-entree combination foods

- Vegetable egg roll with duck sauce



**Table 2-1. Examples of accompaniments  
served with foods in the CNS categories <sup>1</sup>, *continued***

### **Snacks**

- Oatmeal with brown sugar
- Pancakes, waffles or French toast with maple syrup or fruit sauce
- Potato chips with dip
- Pudding with whipped cream
- WGR bagel with cream cheese
- Whole-grain toast with butter and jam
- WGR muffin, cornbread and roll with margarine or butter
- Whole-corn nachos with cheese sauce

### **Cooked grains**

- Brown rice with duck sauce
- WGR pasta cooked with oil, margarine or butter
- WGR pasta with marinara sauce

### **Fruits and vegetables**

- Apple crisp with whipped cream
- Apple slices with caramel dipping sauce
- Carrots with low-fat dressing
- French fries with ketchup
- Salad with low-fat dressing
- Vegetables cooked with oil, margarine or butter

### **Soups**

- Black bean soup with sour cream
- Clam chowder with oyster crackers
- French onion soup with croutons
- Tomato soup with grated cheese

<sup>1</sup> Foods must be evaluated for compliance with the CNS based on the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments.

## General Standards

Competitive food items must meet at least one of the three general standards in table 2-2, and all of the nutrient standards for the specific food category to which they belong, e.g., snacks, entrees, non-entree combination foods, fruits and vegetables, cooked grains, and soups. For information on the nutrient standards for each food category, refer to sections 3 through 8.

### Rationale

Prior to school year 2014-15, the CNS did not include general standards. Effective July 1, 2014, the state nutrition standards committee added the USDA's general standards and exemptions to be consistent with Smart Snacks. The committee chose to be stricter than the Smart Snacks general standards for WGR foods.

The Smart Snacks general standard for WGR foods requires acceptable grain products to contain 50 percent or more whole grains by weight or have whole grains as the first ingredient. This definition is inconsistent with the WGR definition for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns under the USDA's final rule, *Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (77 FR 4088), which updated the school meals offered under the NSLP and SBP, as required by the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#) (Public Law 111-296). For school meals in the NSLP and SBP, grain-based foods must comply with the three criteria below to meet the WGR definition.

1. The product must contain at least 50 percent whole grains.
2. Any other grain ingredients in the product must be enriched.
3. The combined weight of any noncreditable grains in the product (such as bran or germ) must be less than two percent of the product formula. To comply with this limit, the combined total of all noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams for group H (cereal grains) and group I (ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals) of the USDA's ounce equivalents chart. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#).

Since the Smart Snacks definition of acceptable grain products does not include the last two WGR criteria (enriched grains requirement and limit for noncreditable grains), it is inconsistent with the definition of WGR products for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The state nutrition standards committee believed it was important for the WGR standard for a la carte foods to be consistent with the WGR standard for foods allowed for school meals. Therefore, the committee used the same WGR definition for the CNS.

Table 2-2. CNS general standards

General standards	Exemptions
<p>The food item meets at least one of the following three criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Whole grain-rich (WGR) foods:</b> The food item is a grain product that meets the three requirements below.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The product contains at least 50 percent whole grains by weight or has a whole grain as the first ingredient, excluding water. If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be a whole grain.</li> <li>Any remaining grain ingredients are enriched.</li> <li>Any noncreditable grains (such as bran, germ, and modified food starch) are less than 2 percent of the product formula. To comply with this limit, the combined total of all noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams for group H (cereal grains) and group I (RTE breakfast cereals) of the USDA's ounce equivalents chart. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, <a href="#">Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP</a>.</li> </ul> <p>For more information on the WGR requirements and noncreditable grains, review the CSDE's guide, <a href="#">Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12</a>.</p> </li> <li> <b>Food groups:</b> The food item has one of the following food groups as the first ingredient: fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods, e.g., meat, beans, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, and seeds. If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be a fruit, vegetable, whole grain, dairy, or protein food.         </li> <li> <b>Combination foods:</b> The food item is a combination food that contains at least <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> cup of fruit and/or vegetable per serving.         </li> </ol>	<p>The following foods are exempt from the general standards and all nutrient standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.</li> </ul> <p>All other food products are not exempt, and must meet at least one of the general standards and all of the nutrient standards for the specific food category.</p>

## Implementation Guidance

The following guidance helps schools determine whether a food meets one of the three general standards.

### General standard 1: WGR foods

- For commercial products, consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. All listed products will meet at least one general standard and all nutrient standards for the specific food category.
- For products that are not on the CSDE's list, schools must obtain a [product formulation statement](#) (PFS) from the manufacturer that documents the amount of creditable and noncreditable grains per serving. For information on the PFS requirements, review the CSDE's resource, [Product Formulation Statements](#), and section 2 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- For guidance on determining whether a grain is whole, enriched, or noncreditable, review the CSDE's guide, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#), and section 3 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- For information on how to read a food label, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

### General standard 2: food groups

- For commercial products, consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. All listed products will meet at least one general standard and all nutrient standards for the specific food category.
- For products not listed on the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage, schools must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that documents the amount of the food group per serving. For information on the PFS requirements, review the CSDE's resource, [Product Formulation Statements](#), and section 2 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#). For guidance on determining if one of the non-grain food groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods) is the first ingredient in a product, refer to the [MyPlate food groups](#).

## 2 | General Standards

- It is important to note that there are differences between the USDA’s meal pattern components for school meals and the MyPlate food groups. These differences are summarized below.
  - **Meat/meat alternates:** A competitive food could meet general standard 2 because it has a protein food listed as the first ingredient (e.g., chicken, ground beef, or cheese), but it might not meet the USDA’s meal pattern requirements for the meat/meat alternates component. To credit toward the meat/meat alternates component, schools must obtain either a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer’s PFS. CN labels are only available for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the USDA’s meal patterns. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. For more information on CN labels and PFS forms, review the CSDE’s resources, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#) and [Product Formulation Statements](#), and section 2 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

When reviewing foods for compliance with the USDA’s meal patterns, menu planners cannot determine the amount of meat/meat alternates in a food by reading the product’s Nutrition Facts label or ingredients. Protein content is not an indicator that a commercial product credits as the meat/meat alternates component because the grams of protein listed on the product’s Nutrition Facts label do not correspond to the ounce equivalents of the meat/meat alternates component contained in the product. In addition to protein, meat and meat alternates contain other components, such as water, fat, vitamins, and minerals.

Protein is also found in varying amounts in other ingredients (such as cereals, grains, and many vegetables) that may be part of a commercial meat or meat alternate product. The terms “protein” and “meat/meat alternate” are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same. The USDA’s meal patterns require a specific amount of the meat/meat alternates component, not a specific amount of protein, with the exception of commercial tofu and tofu products. For more information, review the CSDE’s resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP](#) and [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP](#).





- **Milk:** The USDA’s meal patterns require a “milk” component, not a “dairy” component. A competitive food could meet general standard 2 because it has milk or another dairy food as the first ingredient, but it will not meet the NSLP or SBP meal pattern requirements for the milk component. For example, commercial smoothies made with milk do not meet the USDA’s requirements for fluid milk because they do not comply with the FDA’s standard of identity for milk.

Only fluid milk credits as the milk component for reimbursable school meals. Dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt credit only as the meat/meat alternates component for reimbursable school meals. However, for the purposes of meeting the CNS general standards, any food from the dairy group (including milk) could be the first ingredient.

### General standard 3: combination foods with at least ¼ cup of fruit/vegetable

- For commercial products, consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. All listed products will meet at least one general standard and all nutrient standards for the specific food category.
- For products not listed on the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage, schools must obtain a PFS from the manufacturer that documents the amount of fruits/vegetables per serving. A CN label could indicate the fruit or vegetable content if the product is a main dish entree that contributes to the meat/meat alternates component. For more information on CN labels, review the CSDE’s resource, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), and section 2 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- For foods made from scratch, review the standardized recipe and use the USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) to determine if one serving contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable per serving. For specific guidance on evaluating recipes, review the CSDE’s resources, [How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS](#) and [Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the CNS](#), and visit the “How To” section of the CSDE’s [CNS](#) webpage. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## 3 — Standards for Snacks

This category includes snack foods such as chips, crackers, popcorn, rice cakes, hard pretzels, pita chips, snack mix, breakfast cereals (e.g., cold ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals and cooked hot cereals such as oatmeal), trail mix, nuts and seeds, peanut butter and other nut/seed butters, meat snacks (e.g., jerky and meat sticks), cookies, cereal bars, granola bars, bakery items (e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, waffles, pancakes, French toast, soft pretzels, and rolls), frozen desserts, ice cream (including ice cream novelties), cheese, pudding, yogurt, and smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice.

These standards apply to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, cream cheese, syrup, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.

### Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for calories has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks and meets the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) recommendations for non-entree a la carte foods (200 calories or less per portion as packaged), as specified in the IOM's publication, *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth*.

One of the goals of the CNS is to encourage appropriate portion sizes that limit calories. Many children consume too many calories. About 40 percent of all children and youth in the United States are either overweight or obese. The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends shifting to healthier food and beverage choices and consuming smaller portions to achieve a healthy dietary pattern within an appropriate number of calories. Meeting the Dietary Guidelines recommendations within calorie needs can help prevent excess weight gain at every life stage and support overall good health.

### Implementation guidance

- Serve products that meet the CNS requirements in a serving size that does not exceed 200 calories. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific snack products that meet the calorie standard.
- Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the calorie standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

### Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	<p>The following foods are exempt from the fat standard but cannot contain chemically altered fat substitutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low-fat or reduced fat 100 percent natural cheese (including part-skim mozzarella);</li> <li>• nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters;</li> <li>• products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added sweeteners or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>• whole eggs with no added fat.</li> </ul> <p>All other snack products are not exempt and must meet the fat standard. The fat exemption does not apply to foods containing cheese, nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, and dried fruit as an <b>ingredient</b>, e.g., peanut butter cookies, pecan cookies, granola bars with nuts, cranberry walnut muffin, cheese crackers, cheese sauce, peanut butter crackers, and sesame seed crackers.</p>

## Rationale

The CNS limit for fat is based on previous guidance from the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to limit overall fat intake between 25 to 35 percent of calories for children and adolescents 4 to 18 years of age. High-fat foods add unnecessary calories to the diet. A diet lower in fat is associated with lower risk of overweight, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers.

The CNS total fat standard and food exemptions are consistent with Smart Snacks. The CNS allows the exemptions for some nutrient-rich foods that are naturally high in fat, including nuts, seeds, nut and seed butters, low-fat or reduced fat 100 percent natural cheese (including part-skim mozzarella), and whole eggs. The majority of fat in nuts, seeds, and nut or seed butters is unsaturated, which promotes cardiovascular health. Natural low-fat and reduced-fat cheese is a good source of protein and calcium.

The CNS also allows a fat exemption for products consisting only of dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added sweeteners (including nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols) or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes). This exemption is consistent with the committee's previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners or sugar alcohols, and is stricter than the Smart Snacks exemption, which only prohibits added nutritive (caloric) sweeteners. For more information, refer to the standard for sugars in this section and "[CNS Philosophy](#)" in section 1.

For school year 2017-18, the CNS committee added the Smart Snacks final rule's fat exemption for whole eggs. Eggs are high in protein and contain essential nutrients including, B vitamins, Vitamin E, Vitamin D, iron, zinc, and magnesium. While eggs are high in fat, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends increased consumption of nutrient-dense foods and includes eggs in a healthy eating pattern. Evidence suggests that one egg a day does not increase a person's risk for high cholesterol or cardiovascular diseases.

Smart Snacks does not address added versus naturally occurring fat for exempted foods. The CNS fat exemptions apply only to the naturally occurring fat in these nutrient-rich foods. If fat is added (e.g., peanuts roasted in oil, peanut butter with added oil, or cheese sauce with added oil), the product is evaluated for compliance based on the amount of added fat contained.

The CNS advocates whole or minimally processed foods that are naturally nutrient rich and low in fat. Therefore, the CNS does not allow reducing fat with chemically altered fat substitutes such as Olestra, Olean, and Simplese. Research has not addressed the safety of moderate use of fat replacers for children. Fat substitutes can have negative side effects. For example, Olestra can cause abdominal cramping and diarrhea, and inhibits the absorption of some vitamins and other nutrients. Simplese can cause allergic reactions in people with allergies to milk or eggs.

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any snack products containing added chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Increase the availability of snack items that are fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, or minimally processed foods made from these ingredients. These foods are naturally low in fat.
- Choose snack foods that are lowest in total fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- If snacks contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- The fat exemption for cheese applies only to 100 percent natural (real) cheese, pasteurized blended cheese and cottage cheese, as defined by the FDA’s standards of identity ([CFR 21 Part 133](#)). The fat exemption does not apply to full-fat cheese or foods that contain cheese as an ingredient, such as pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, pasteurized process cheese product, cheese sauces, and cheese crackers. These foods must meet the specific fat standard for the snacks category. For more information, refer to the definitions for “natural cheese” and “pasteurized blended cheese” in the [Glossary](#).
- Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters often contain added saturated fat. Examples include peanuts roasted in oil or peanut butter made with partially hydrogenated soybean oil. Check the ingredients list and choose nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters without added saturated fat. Product that contain partially hydrogenated oils do not meet the trans fat standard. For more information, refer to “[Trans Fat](#)” in this section.
- The exemption for the naturally occurring fat in nuts, seeds, and nut or seed butters does not apply to any added fat in these foods. Nuts, seeds, and nut or seed butters with added fat are evaluated for compliance based on the amount of added fat contained. The manufacturer must provide information regarding the amount of naturally occurring versus added fat in a serving.
- The fat exemption does not apply to packaged snacks containing nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, and cheese as an ingredient. Examples include peanut butter cookies, pecan cookies, granola bars with nuts, cranberry walnut muffin, cheese crackers, cheese sauce, peanut butter crackers, and sesame seed crackers. These foods must meet the specific fat standard for the snacks category. **Note:** Combination snack foods such as peanut butter with carrot sticks are evaluated in the category for non-entree combination foods (refer to [section 5](#)).

- Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	<p>The following foods are exempt from the standard for saturated fat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low-fat or reduced fat 100 percent natural cheese (including part-skim mozzarella);</li> <li>nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters;</li> <li>products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added sweeteners or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>whole eggs with no added fat.</li> </ul> <p>The saturated fat exemption does not apply to packaged snacks containing these foods as an <b>ingredient</b>, e.g., peanut butter cookies, pecan cookies, granola bars with nuts, cranberry walnut muffin, cheese crackers, cheese sauce, peanut butter crackers, and sesame seed crackers.</p>

## Rationale

The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends limiting saturated fat intake to less than 10 percent of total calories, with most fats consumed from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, e.g., fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Foods that are high in saturated fat increase the risk of coronary artery disease by raising blood cholesterol.



The saturated fat standard and food exemptions have not changed since the last update of the CNS, and are consistent with Smart Snacks. The CNS allows exemptions for some nutrient-rich foods that are naturally high in saturated fat, including nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, and low-fat or reduced fat 100 percent natural cheese. The majority of fat in nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters is unsaturated, which promotes cardiovascular health. Natural low-fat and reduced-fat cheese is a good source of protein and calcium.

The CNS also allows a fat exemption for products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added sweeteners (including nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols) or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes). This exemption is consistent with the committee's approach to nonnutritive sweeteners or sugar alcohols, and is stricter than the USDA's exemption, which only prohibits added nutritive (caloric) sweeteners. For more information, refer to the standard for sugars in this section and "[CNS Philosophy](#)" in section 1.

For school year 2017-18, the CNS committee added the Smart Snacks' saturated fat exemption for whole eggs. Eggs are high in protein and contain essential nutrients including, B vitamins, Vitamin E, Vitamin D, iron, zinc, and magnesium. While eggs are high in fat, the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends increased consumption of nutrient-dense foods and includes eggs in a healthy eating pattern. Evidence suggests that one egg a day does not increase a person's risk for high cholesterol or cardiovascular diseases.

Smart Snacks does not address added versus naturally occurring saturated fat for exempted foods. The CNS saturated fat exemptions apply only to the naturally occurring saturated fat in these nutrient-rich foods. If saturated fat is added (e.g., peanuts roasted in oil, peanut butter with added oil or cheese sauce with added oil), the product must be evaluated for compliance based on the amount of added saturated fat contained.



## Implementation guidance

- Increase the availability of snack items that are fruits, vegetables, and whole grains or minimally processed snacks made from these ingredients. These foods are naturally low in saturated fat.
- Choose snack foods that are lowest in saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the saturated fat content of brand-specific products. Major food sources of saturated fat in the snacks category include ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt, cakes, cookies, quick breads, doughnuts, potato chips, corn chips, and popcorn.
- If snacks contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- The saturated fat exemption for cheese applies only to 100 percent natural (real) cheese, pasteurized blended cheese and cottage cheese, as defined by the FDA’s standards of identity ([21 CFR 133](#)). The saturated fat exemption does not apply to full-fat cheese or foods that contain cheese as an ingredient, such as pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, pasteurized process cheese product, cheese sauces, and cheese crackers. These foods must meet the specific saturated fat standard for the snacks category. For more information, refer to the definitions for “natural cheese” and “pasteurized blended cheese” in the [Glossary](#).
- Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters often contain added saturated fat. Examples include peanuts roasted in oil or peanut butter made with partially hydrogenated soybean oil. Check the ingredients list and choose nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters without added saturated fat. Product that contain partially hydrogenated oils do not meet the trans fat standard. For more information, refer to “[Trans Fat](#)” in this section.
- The saturated fat exemption does not apply to packaged snacks containing nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters as an ingredient. Examples include peanut butter cookies, pecan cookies, granola bars with nuts, cranberry walnut muffin, cheese crackers, cheese sauce, peanut butter crackers, and sesame seed crackers. These foods must meet the specific saturated fat standard for the snacks category. **Note:** Combination snack foods such as peanut butter with carrot sticks are evaluated in the category for non-entree combination foods (refer to [section 5](#)).



- +Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The state nutrition standards committee decided to maintain the trans fat standard for school year 2021-22 for two reasons: 1) to avoid potential confusion between the current trans fat standard for school meals versus competitive foods; and 2) to ensure that all commercial products available to schools comply with the FDA's trans fat ban. The committee recognizes that the CNS trans standard will eventually be moot, and will likely be eliminated for school year 2022-23. The FDA's 2015 rule required the removal of trans fats from commercial food products by January 1, 2021 (refer to "History of FDA labeling for trans fat").

The dietary specifications for school meals include a trans fat standard. The USDA's proposed rule from January 23, 2020, *Simplifying Meal Service and Monitoring Requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (85 FR 4094), proposes removing trans fat as a dietary specification for school meals effective July 1, 2021. As of the date of this publication, the USDA's rule has not been finalized and the current trans fat standard for school meals still applies.



## History of FDA labeling for trans fat

In November 2013, the FDA announced a proposal to remove partially hydrogenated oils from the "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) list, and therefore eliminate most trans fats from the food supply (*Tentative Determination Regarding Partially Hydrogenated Oils; Request for Comments and for Scientific Data and Information* (78 FR 67169)). In June 2015, the FDA issued the *Final Determination Regarding Partially Hydrogenated Oils* (80 FR 34650), indicating that partially hydrogenated oils are not "generally recognized as safe" (GRAS) for any use in human food. This required manufacturers to remove

artificial trans fats from all products by June 18, 2018. Prior to the change in the FDA’s regulations for trans fats, foods that contained less than 0.5 gram of artificial trans fats could state “0 grams” on the Nutrition Facts label.

The FDA allowed until January 1, 2020, for certain products produced prior to this time to work their way through distribution. In addition, manufacturers with less than \$10 million in annual food sales had until January 1, 2021, to comply. For more information, visit the FDA’s webpage, [Final Determination Regarding Partially Hydrogenated Oils \(Removing Trans Fat\)](#).

## History of CNS trans fat standard

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter trans fat standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. The committee published the 2015-16 trans fat standard in the 2014-15 CNS to provide a 1½-year notice for industry.

This standard restricts only artificial trans fat, not small amount of trans fat occur naturally in some animal foods, such as dairy products and meats. The state nutrition standards committee recognizes that eliminating naturally occurring trans fat from the diet is unnecessarily restrictive because it would require the elimination of nutrient-rich foods from children’s diets, such as dairy products and meats.

The state nutrition standards committee felt strongly that trans fat should be eliminated in schools since there is no safe level of artificial trans fat consumption. Trans fats increase the risk of coronary artery disease by raising low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and lowering high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Since the partial hydrogenation of vegetable oils accounts for more than 80 percent of the total intake of trans fat in the diet, the elimination of processed foods with partially hydrogenated oils will significantly lower children’s trans fat intake.

## Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for all commercial products to ensure that they do not contain any partially hydrogenated oils. For information on how to read a food label, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Most artificial trans fats are found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, and other processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.

- Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to [“Evaluating foods made from scratch”](#) in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight and no more than 15 grams of total sugars as served, including any added accompaniments.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Smoothies:</b> No more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce for smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and/or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit and/or 100 percent juice. The portion size is limited to no more than 8 fluid ounces for elementary schools and 12 fluid ounces for middle and high schools.</li> <li><b>Yogurt and pudding:</b> No more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce.</li> </ul> </li> <li>No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.</li> </ul>	<p>The following foods are exempt from the sugars standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added sweeteners (including artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols) or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>frozen desserts containing only 100 percent juice and/or fruit and no added sweeteners (including artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols).</li> </ul> <p>All other snack products are not exempt and must meet the standard for sugars.</p>

## Rationale

The CNS sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. The CNS includes a standard for gram limits because “35 percent of total sugars by weight” alone does not provide sufficient restriction of sugar content for snack foods. Since the snack items in this category are typically not nutrient-rich foods, maintaining the standard of “no more than 15 grams of total sugars” eliminates foods that are high in added sugars.

For yogurt, pudding, and smoothies, the CNS standard is stricter than Smarts Snacks because it is based on “grams per ounce” instead of “percent by weight.” The “percent by weight” standard does not provide any appreciable restriction of sugar content for dense foods by weight, and is difficult to apply to snack foods such as smoothies whose serving size is based on volume (e.g., fluid ounces) not weight. For more information, refer to “[Volume versus weight](#)” in section 2.

The Smart Snacks standard of no more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight allows up to 9.9 grams of sugars per ounce. (One ounce is equivalent to 28.35 grams. Thirty-five percent of 28.35 grams equals 9.9 grams.)

Table 3-1 shows some sample calculations for “percent of total sugars by weight” and “grams per ounce” for different serving sizes of yogurt. For example, with the Smart Snack standards, 6 ounces (170 grams) of yogurt could contain 59.5 grams (14.9 teaspoons) of total sugars. This is two and a half times the limit allowed by the CNS sugar standard of no more than 4 grams per ounce, which limits total sugars to 24 grams (6 teaspoons) in a 6-ounce serving of yogurt.



Table 3-1. Examples of sugar limits for yogurt with Smart Snacks and CNS						
Serving size of yogurt	Federal standard: No more than 35 percent by weight		State standard: No more than 4 grams per ounce		Additional amount of total sugars allowed by federal standard	
	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>
2 ounces (56.7 grams)	19.8	5.0	8	2	11.8	3.0
4 ounces (113.4 grams)	39.7	9.9	16	4	23.7	5.9
6 ounces (170.1 grams)	59.5	14.9	24	6	35.5	8.9
8 ounces (226.8 grams)	79.4	19.8	32	8	47.4	11.8
<sup>1</sup> Approximate teaspoons based on 4 grams of sugars per teaspoon.						

The USDA’s [National Nutrient Database](#) indicates that plain yogurt contains about 2.2 grams of naturally occurring sugars per ounce (13.2 grams in 6 ounces). The Smart Snacks standard allows 46.3 grams of added sugars (11.6 teaspoons) in a 6-ounce serving of yogurt. (Total sugars of 59.5 grams minus naturally occurring sugars of 13.2 grams equals 46.3 grams of added sugars.) This is more than three times the amount of added sugars allowed by the CNS sugar standard of “no more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce,” which limits added sugars to 10.8 grams in a 6-ounce serving. (Total sugars of 24 grams minus naturally occurring sugars of 13.2 grams equals 10.8 grams of added sugars.)

The CNS standard prohibiting nonnutritive sweeteners (artificial and natural) and sugar alcohols is stricter than Smart Snacks, and supports the philosophy of the CNS (refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1). The CNS advocates whole or minimally processed foods that are naturally nutrient rich and low in added sugars. Therefore, the CNS does not allow reducing sugars through the use of any nonnutritive sweeteners (artificial or natural) or sugar alcohols.

Children need to learn to enjoy the natural favors of healthy foods that have not been artificially enhanced with a sweet taste. There is little evidence on the long-term health effects of nonnutritive sweeteners, particularly from exposure initiated in childhood. Evidence of the effectiveness of nonnutritive sweeteners in promoting weight loss is inconclusive. Some research suggests that nonnutritive sweeteners can increase cravings for sweet foods and lead to increased calorie consumption.

The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends consuming less than 10 percent of calories from added sugars. On average, added sugars account for almost 270 calories (more than 13 percent of total calories) per day in the U.S. population. Intakes as a percent of calories are particularly high among children and adolescents.

Many foods that contain added sugars provide few or no essential nutrients, and no dietary fiber. However, foods that are naturally high in sugars such as fruits and milk should not be restricted because they provide nutrients and other healthful components. Both naturally occurring sugars and added sugars increase the risk of dental caries.

## Implementation guidance

- Choose snack foods that are lowest in sugars. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sugar content of brand-specific products. For more information on reducing sugars, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



- Read labels and choose foods without added sugars. Effective July 26, 2018, the FDA’s final rule, *Food Labeling: Revision of the Nutrition and Supplement Facts Labels* (81 FR 33741), requires that the amount (grams) of added sugars is listed on the Nutrition Facts panel beneath the amount of total sugars, and is also listed as percent Daily Value. [Table 3-2](#) lists commons added sugars.
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).
- **Yogurt:** Flavored yogurt cannot contain more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce. Acceptable products contain no more than:

- 9 grams of total sugars in 2.25 ounces;
- 16 grams of total sugars in 4 ounces;
- 24 grams of total sugars in 6 ounces; and
- 32 grams of total sugars in 8 ounces.



Yogurts labeled “light” or “lite” typically contain nonnutritive sweeteners. Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#), and “artificial sweeteners,” “nonnutritive sweeteners” and “sugar alcohols” in the [Glossary](#).

- **Smoothies:** Smoothies include foods made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice, such as low-fat yogurt and fruit smoothies or soy yogurt and fruit juice smoothies. The portion size of smoothies is limited to no more than 8 fluid ounces for elementary schools and 12 fluid ounces for middle and high schools. Smoothies cannot contain more than 4 grams of total sugars per fluid ounce. Acceptable products contain no more than:
  - 16 grams of total sugars in 4 fluid ounces;
  - 32 grams of total sugars in 8 fluid ounces;
  - 40 grams of total sugars in 10 fluid ounces; and
  - 48 grams of total sugars in 12 fluid ounces.



- **Pudding:** Pudding cannot contain more than 4 grams of total sugars per ounce. Acceptable products contain no more than 16 grams of total sugars in 4 ounces.

**Table 3-2. Common sugars and sweeteners**

Added sugars		
Brown rice syrup	Glucose	Maple syrup
Brown sugar	High-fructose corn syrup	Nectars, e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar
Corn sweetener	Honey	Raw sugar
Corn syrup	Invert sugar	Sorghum syrup
Corn syrup solids	Lactose	Sucrose
Dextrin	Malt syrup	Syrup
Dextrose	Maltose	
Fructose	Molasses	
Fruit juice concentrate		
Artificial and nonnutritive sweeteners <sup>1</sup>		
Common artificial sweeteners	Sugar alcohols	“Natural” nonnutritive sweeteners <sup>2</sup>
Acesulfame potassium (acesulfame-k, sunett, sweet & safe, sweet one)	Erythritol	Stevia (rebiana, rebaudioside a, truvia, purevia, sweetleaf)
Aspartame (nutrasweet, equal)	Isomalt	
Neotame	Lactitol	
Saccharin (sweet and low, sweet twin, sweet ‘n low brown, necta sweet)	Maltitol	
Sucralose (splenda)	Mannitol	
tagatose	Sorbitol	
	Xylitol	
	Hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (e.g., hydrogenated glucose syrups, maltitol syrups and sorbitol syrups)	
<div><div><sup>1</sup> The CNS does not allow foods that contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. Choose nutrient-dense foods that are naturally low in sugars.</div><div><sup>2</sup> The term “natural” does not have any consistent meaning when used to describe foods or beverages. This term has not been defined by the FDA.</div></div>		

## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS sodium standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and are stricter than Smart Snacks.

Based on the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction (CDRR) levels defined by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's [Dietary Reference Intakes \(DRIs\) for sodium](#), the 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends the following daily limits for sodium intake:

- 1,200 milligrams per day for ages 1 through 3;
- 1,500 milligrams per day for ages 4 through 8;
- 1,800 milligrams per day for ages 9 through 13; and
- 2,300 milligrams per day for all other age groups.

The CDRR for sodium was established using evidence of the benefit of reducing sodium intake on cardiovascular risk and hypertension risk. A high sodium intake increases the risk of high blood pressure in individuals who are sodium sensitive. Keeping blood pressure in the normal range reduces the risk of heart disease, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

Average sodium intakes are high across the U.S. population compared to the recommended limits of the CDRR. Average intake for ages 1 and older is 3,393 milligrams per day, with a range of about 2,000 to 5,000 milligrams per day. Most sodium consumed in the U.S. comes from salt added during commercial food processing and preparation, including foods prepared at restaurants.

## Implementation guidance

- Choose snack foods that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sodium content of brand-specific products. For more information on reducing sodium, review section 6 of the CSDE's publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- Eliminate or reduce sodium added to snacks made from scratch. Entities that sell snacks made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for caffeine has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Smart Snacks prohibits caffeinated foods and beverages for elementary and middle students, but allows them for high school students. The CNS prohibits caffeine in all foods and beverages for all grades.

This standard is consistent with the IOM's nutrition standard for caffeine, indicated in [Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth](#). The IOM recommends that school foods and beverages are caffeine free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances. The state nutrition standards committee agrees with the IOM recommendations and rationale for caffeine. The committee does not support offering products with significant amounts of caffeine for school-age children because of the potential for adverse effects, including physical dependency and withdrawal.

Some foods and beverages contain trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine and related substances. Examples include chocolate chip cookies and coffee yogurt. These foods are allowed if the product otherwise complies with the CNS.

**Note:** Connecticut's beverage statute prohibits all caffeinated beverages and therefore supersedes the federal requirements. For more information, refer to "[Beverage Requirements for Public Schools](#)" in section 1. The beverage requirements apply to all public schools regardless of whether the district chooses the healthy food option of HFC or participates in the NSLP.

### Implementation guidance

- Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the caffeine standard.
- Read the ingredients statement for processed snacks to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.

## 4 — Standards for Entrees

The CNS entree definition includes three categories of main dish food items:

1. a combination food of meat/meat alternate and WGR food, e.g., breakfast egg sandwich on whole-wheat English muffin, turkey wrap on whole-wheat tortilla, pizza with WGR crust, hamburger on whole-grain bun, and bean burrito with whole-corn tortilla;
2. a combination food of vegetable/fruit and meat/meat alternate, e.g., chef's salad with turkey, cheese and hard-boiled egg, fruit and cheese platter, yogurt and fruit parfait, school-made yogurt and fruit/vegetable smoothies (breakfast only), baked potato with chili, and chicken vegetable stir-fry; and
3. a meat/meat alternate alone (e.g., sausage patty, hard-boiled egg, grilled chicken), excluding yogurt, cheese, nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, and meat snacks, e.g., beef jerky and meat sticks.

Foods defined by the menu planner as entrees for the NSLP or SBP might not meet the definition for entrees under the CNS. For example, a menu planner might feature French toast and pancakes as the “entree” for lunch. However, these foods are not considered entrees under the CNS because they do not contain a meat/meat alternate and do not meet the entree definition. French toast and pancakes foods are “baked items” in the snacks category and must be evaluated using the nutrition standards in [section 3](#).

Table 4-1. Examples of entrees

Combination food of meat/meat alternate and WGR food



Combination food of vegetable/fruit and meat/meat alternate



Meat/meat alternate alone <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The category of “meat/meat alternate alone” does not include yogurt, cheese, nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters and meat snacks e.g., jerky and meat sticks. These foods are in the snacks category.

## Entree Exemption



The entree standards differentiate between 1) entree items sold a la carte during the meal service on the same day that they are planned as part of reimbursable school meals; and 2) entree items that are sold only as a la carte items and are not planned as part of reimbursable school meals. The standards for entrees apply only to entree items that are **sold only a la carte**, i.e., entrees that are not part of a reimbursable meal.

Entree items that are sold a la carte during the meal service on the same day that they are planned and served as part of a reimbursable school meal are exempt from all nutrient standards if they:

- are the same or smaller portion size as the NSLP and SBP;
- have the same accompaniments (refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2);

- meet the trans fat standard; and
- do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, or chemically altered fat substitutes.

Table 4-2 shows when the CNS apply to entree items.

Table 4-2. Application of CNS to entrees	
Exempt from CNS	CNS apply
<p>Sold as part of reimbursable meals and a la carte on the same day</p> 	<p>Sold only a la carte</p> 

The exemption applies only to entrees that are sold a la carte **during the meal service on the same day** that they are planned and sold as part of a reimbursable meal. It does not apply to any other meal items that are sold a la carte such as fruits, vegetables, soups, breads, rice and pasta. All other food items sold separately from the meal are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards. For example:

- french fries that are part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless they meet the nutrition standards for the fruits and vegetables category ([section 6](#));
- tossed salad with dressing that is part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless it meets the nutrition standards for the fruits and vegetables category ([section 6](#));
- muffins that are part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless they meet the nutrition standards for the snacks category ([section 3](#)); and
- cookies that are part of a reimbursable meal cannot be sold a la carte unless they meet the nutrition standards for the snacks category ([section 3](#)).

## Overall Rationale for Entrees

The CNS includes an exemption provision for entree items sold a la carte during the meal service on the same day that they are planned and served as part of reimbursable meals. This is stricter than Smart Snacks, which allows an exemption provision for entrees sold during the meal service “on the day of service or the day after service.” The CNS exemption provision ensures that any leftover entrees served the next day are part of reimbursable meals. This is consistent with the goal of encouraging students to choose a reimbursable meal instead of a single entree item.

The state nutrition standards committee originally developed the entree exemption because they felt it was not necessary to develop a separate set of nutrition standards for entree items that are already addressed by the standards for reimbursable school meals. The committee based this decision on the rationale below.

- Meals served in the NSLP and SBP are already planned to meet the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrient standards) for reimbursable school meals.
- The USDA’s dietary specifications already set limits for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium in school meals. Menu planners have selected the entrees for reimbursable meals to meet the USDA’s dietary specifications based on the weekly school menu.
- A la carte sales of these items are secondary to the sale of the planned meal.

Smart Snacks also uses this approach. For more information on the USDA’s nutrient standards for school meals, review the CSDE’s resource, [\*Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12\*](#).

Restricting calories and portion size to be the same as comparable entree items ensures that reasonable portions are provided. One of the goals of the CNS is to encourage appropriate portion sizes that limit calories. Many children consume too many calories. About 40 percent of all children and youth in the United States are either overweight or obese. The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends shifting to healthier food and beverage choices and consuming smaller portions to achieve a healthy dietary pattern within an appropriate number of calories. Meeting the Dietary Guidelines recommendations within calorie needs can help prevent excess weight gain at every life stage and support overall good health.



## Overall Implementation Guidance for Entrees

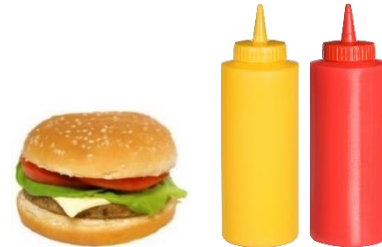
- Read product labels and specifications. Purchase entree items that are lower in total fat, saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium.
- Serve entree items containing whole grains (e.g., whole-grain breads, whole-grain pasta, and whole brown rice) and naturally fiber-rich foods (e.g., vegetables, legumes, and fruits) most often. These foods are naturally low in fat.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for entrees made from scratch. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- If entrees contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- Prepare entrees with flavorful herbs and spices instead of condiments. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- If condiments and other accompaniments are used with entrees, serve low-fat, low-sugar, and low-sodium versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.
- Set a la carte prices that encourage students to choose the reimbursable meal instead of a single entree item, i.e., the cost of purchasing individual a la carte items is greater than the cost of purchasing the complete reimbursable meal.



## Entrees Sold Only A La Carte

This category includes all main dish entree items (commercial and made from scratch) that meet the **entree definition** and are **sold only a la carte**, i.e., entree items that are not planned and served as part of reimbursable school meals on the same day. For more information, refer to tables 4-1 and 4-2.

These standards apply to the amount of the entree item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, oil, cream cheese, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.



### Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 350 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for calories has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting calories, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Calories” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Serve entrees that meet all CNS requirements in a serving size that does not exceed 350 calories. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the calorie standard.
- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the calorie standard . Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating](#)

foods made from scratch” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	<p>The following foods are exempt from the fat standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seafood with no added fat (including chemically altered fat substitutes).</li> </ul>

## Rationale

The CNS total fat standard and food exemptions have not changed since the last update of the CNS, and are consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting total fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Total Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee kept the previous standard prohibiting artificial fat replacers because it is stricter than Smart Snacks and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1.

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any entree products containing chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1.

The state nutrition standards committee originally developed the fat standard to encourage schools to plan and sell all entree items as part of reimbursable meals. Setting a limit on percent of calories from fat means that schools cannot sell higher fat entrees a la carte unless they are also part of a reimbursable meal that meets the USDA’s nutrient standards. When entree items are combined with low-fat or fat-free milk, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, the overall meal can meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.



## Implementation guidance

- Purchase entrees that are lower in fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the standards for the entrees category.
- Serve entree items containing whole grains (e.g., whole-grain breads, whole-grain pasta, and whole brown rice) and naturally fiber-rich foods (e.g., vegetables, legumes, and fruits) most often. These foods are naturally low in fat.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques and prepare entrees made from scratch with flavorful herbs and spices. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- If entrees contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- If condiments and other accompaniments are used with entrees, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that cooked grains do not contain chemically altered fat substitutes. For more information, refer to “chemically altered fat substitutes” in the Glossary.
- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the total fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for saturated fat has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting saturated fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Saturated Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee originally developed the saturated fat standard to encourage schools to plan and sell all entree items as part of reimbursable meals. Setting a limit on percent of calories from saturated fat means that schools cannot sell high saturated fat entrees a la carte unless they are also part of a reimbursable meal that meets the USDA’s nutrient standards. When entree items are combined with low-fat or fat-free milk, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, the overall meal can meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

### Implementation guidance

- Purchase entrees that are lower in saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the saturated fat standard for the entrees category.
- Serve entree items containing whole grains (e.g., whole-grain breads, whole-grain pasta, and whole brown rice) and naturally fiber-rich foods (e.g., vegetables, legumes, and fruits) most often. These foods are naturally low in saturated fat.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques and prepare entrees made from scratch with flavorful herbs and spices. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- If entrees contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- If condiments and other accompaniments are used with entrees, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to [“Accompaniments”](#) in section 2.

- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. For information on the rationale for eliminating trans fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Trans Fat" in [section 3](#).

There is no exemption for trans fats for entrees sold only a la carte because the USDA's dietary specifications for school meals require that all nutrition labels or manufacturer specifications for foods and ingredients used in the NSLP and SBP must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving.



This standard restricts only artificial trans fats. It does not restrict the naturally occurring trans fat in foods such as beef, lamb and dairy products made with whole milk. Animal products contain only naturally occurring trans fat unless they are processed with partially hydrogenated oils.

## Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for all commercial products to ensure that they do not contain any partially hydrogenated oils.
- If trans fat is listed on the nutrition facts panel of a product containing meat or dairy, schools must obtain documentation from the manufacturer such as a product formulation statement (PFS) that indicates the amount and source of the trans fat (both naturally occurring and artificial). For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, [Product Formulation Statements](#), and section 2 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for entrees made from scratch. Eliminate added sources of trans fat when cooking such as vegetable shortening and margarines that contain partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight and no more than 15 grams of total sugars as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners or sugar alcohols.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The standard includes gram limits in addition to “percent by weight,” because “percent by weight” alone does not provide any appreciable restriction of sugar content for dense foods like

entrees. Using only the USDA’s “percent by weight” standard would weaken the integrity of the CNS.

The Smart Snacks standard of no more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight allows up to 9.9 grams of sugars per ounce. (One ounce is equivalent to 28.35 grams. Thirty-five percent of 28.35 grams equals 9.9 grams.) Table 4-3 shows some sample calculations for different serving sizes of entrees.

For example, a 4-ounce entree (113.4 grams) could contain 39.7 grams (9.9 teaspoons) of total sugars. This is almost three times the amount of total sugars allowed by the CNS sugar standard of no more than 15 grams per entree. Since entrees are typically low in added sugars, most products will not reach these levels. The standard of “no more than 15 grams” ensures that high-sugar entree products are not used.

<b>Table 4-3. Examples of total sugar limits for entrees with Smart Snacks and CNS</b>						
<b>Serving size of entree item</b>	<b>Federal standard: No more than 35 percent by weight</b>		<b>State standard: No more than 35 percent by weight and 15 grams of total sugars</b>		<b>Additional amount of total sugars allowed by federal standards</b>	
	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>	Grams	Teaspoons <sup>1</sup>
1 ounce (28.35 grams)	9.9	2.5	9.9	2.5	0.0	0
2 ounces (56.7 grams)	19.8	5.0	15.0	3.8	4.8	1.2
3 ounces (85.1 grams)	29.8	7.4	15.0	3.8	14.8	3.7
4 ounces (113.4 grams)	39.7	9.9	15.0	3.8	24.7	6.2
<sup>1</sup> The approximate number of teaspoons is based on the conversion factor of 4 grams of sugars per teaspoon.						



## Implementation guidance

- Choose prepared entree products that are lowest in sugars. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sugar content of brand-specific products.
- Read labels and choose entrees without added sugars. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of “added sugars,” refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that entrees do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Prepare entrees made from scratch without added sugars.
- Provide low-sugar alternatives to condiments, dressings, and sauces. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2. Check the ingredients statement of “low” or “reduced” sugar accompaniments to ensure that they do not contain nonnutritive sweeteners.
- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 480 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for sodium has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting sodium, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sodium” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Choose prepared entree products that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sodium content of brand-specific products.
- Eliminate or reduce sodium added to entrees made from scratch. Use salt-free seasonings such as herbs and spices. For more information on reducing sodium, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 for Grades K-12](#).
- Eliminate saltshakers and salt packets from the serving line.
- Use entrees containing fresh and frozen vegetables. If canned vegetables are used, select no sodium or low-sodium varieties.
- Provide low-sodium alternatives to condiments, dressings and sauces. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.
- Entities that sell a la carte entrees made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for caffeine has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting caffeine, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Caffeine” in [section 3](#).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any entree products containing added caffeine. However, the committee kept the previous standard prohibiting caffeine to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for processed entrees to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.
- Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the entree standards.



## 5 — Standards for Non-entree Combination Foods

This category includes nutrient-rich combination foods that are not entrees, such as WGR vegetable egg rolls, carrot sticks with peanut butter, and vegetables with hummus dip. Foods in these categories either:

- do not meet the main dish criteria for entrees; or
- do not provide the minimum meal pattern requirements for meat/meat alternates and grains together, or meat/meat alternates alone.



These standards apply to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, oil, sour cream, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.

**Note:** Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds are evaluated with the standards for the snacks category (refer to [section 3](#)).

### Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 200 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for calories has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The calorie standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. For information on the rationale for limiting calories, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Calories” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Serve non-entree combination foods that meet all requirements of the CNS in a serving size that does not exceed 200 calories. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the calorie standard.
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the calorie standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The standard for total fat has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The total fat standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. For information on the rationale for limiting fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Total Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee kept the previous standard prohibiting artificial fat replacers because it is stricter than Smart Snacks, and supports the philosophy of the CNS (refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any combination foods containing added chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial non-entree combination products developed with these ingredients.

## Implementation guidance

- Increase the availability of non-entree combination foods made with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods are naturally low in fat.
- Choose non-entree combination foods that are lowest in fat. Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- If accompaniments (e.g., condiments) are used, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to "[Accompaniments](#)" in section 2.
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that sell non-entree combination foods do not contain chemically altered fat substitutes. For more information, refer to "chemically altered fat substitutes" in the Glossary.
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the total fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for saturated fat has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The saturated fat standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. For information on the rationale for limiting saturated fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Saturated Fat” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Increase the availability of non-entree combination foods made with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods are naturally low in saturated fat.
- Choose non-entree combination foods that are lowest in saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the saturated fat content of brand-specific products.
- Choose nut and seed butters without partially hydrogenated oils, such as peanut butter that does not contain partially hydrogenated soybean oil. Nonhydrogenated nut butters, such as all natural peanut butter or almond butter, will have no trans fat, minimal saturated fat, and will provide healthy unsaturated fat.
- All nut and seed butters must be completely trans fat free, i.e., the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils. Read the ingredients statement to identify whether a product contains partially hydrogenated oils.
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. The trans fat standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. For information on the rationale for eliminating trans fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Trans Fat” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- All non-entree combination foods must be completely trans fat free, i.e., the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils. Read the ingredients statement to identify whether a product contains partially hydrogenated oils.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for non-entree combination foods made from scratch. Eliminate added sources of trans fat when cooking such as vegetable shortening and margarines that contain partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The sugar standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. The standard prohibiting artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sugars” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Choose non-entree combination foods that are lowest in sugars. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sugar content of brand-specific products. For more information on reducing sugars, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- Read labels and choose foods without added sugars. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of “added sugars,” refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for sodium has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The sodium standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. For information on the rationale for limiting sodium, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sodium” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Choose foods that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sodium content of brand-specific products.
- Eliminate or reduce sodium added to non-entree combination foods made from scratch. Use salt-free seasonings instead such as herbs and spices. For more information on reducing sodium, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *[Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#)*.
- Entities that sell non-entree combination foods made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The standard for caffeine has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. The caffeine standard is consistent with all other non-entree categories in the CNS. For information on the rationale for limiting caffeine, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Caffeine” in [section 3](#).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any non-entree combination products containing added caffeine. However, the committee kept the previous standard prohibiting caffeine to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for processed non-entree combination foods to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.
- Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage or brand-specific products that meet the standards for non-entree combination foods.

## 6 — Standards for Fruits and Vegetables

This category includes fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits (including fruit snacks that are 100 percent fruit) and vegetables. These standards apply to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, oil, cream cheese, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.

Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds are evaluated under the snacks category (refer to [section 3](#)).

### Overall Rationale for Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins, minerals, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases. They are high in fiber and help children feel fuller longer.

Almost 90 percent of the U.S. population does not meet the recommendation for vegetables. In addition, with few exceptions, the U.S. population does not meet intake recommendations for any of the vegetable subgroups. About 80 percent of the U.S. population does not meet the recommendation for fruit.

The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends increasing vegetable and fruit intake; eating a variety of vegetables from each subgroup, including dark green, red and orange, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), starchy, and other; and consuming at least half of the recommended amount of fruit in whole forms (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) instead of 100 percent juice.



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that most fruits and vegetables come from whole food rather than juice. The AAP policy statement, *The Use and Misuse of Fruit Juice in Pediatrics*, recommends limiting daily juice consumption to 4-6 ounces for ages 1 to 6 and 8-12 ounces for ages 7 to 18. Excessive juice consumption may be linked to children becoming overweight or obese and is associated with tooth decay and diarrhea. Whole fruits and vegetables provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice. Juice does not offer any nutritional benefits over whole fruits and vegetables.

Juice must meet the requirements specified by [C.G.S. Section 10-221q](#). For more information, refer to “[Beverage Requirements for Public Schools](#)” in section 1.

## Overall Implementation Guidance for Fruits and Vegetables

- To ensure nutrient-rich choices for students, competitive foods should include a variety of different fruits and vegetables each day. Offer a la carte vegetable choices from each of the five vegetable subgroups, especially dark green, red and orange vegetables and legumes. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, *Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP*.
- Include whole or cut up fresh fruits and vegetables without added fat, sugars, or sodium whenever possible.
- Serve whole fruits and vegetables instead of juice. Fruit juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits. Whole fruits provide fewer calories and more nutrients than juice and should be served most often, as recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

## Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 200 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	<p>The following fruit and vegetable products are exempt from the calorie standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>• canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>• low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats.</li> </ul> <p>All other fruit and vegetable products are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards.</p>

## Rationale

The CNS calorie standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For school year 2017-18, the state nutrition standards committee updated the exemption for canned vegetables to be consistent with the Smart Snacks final rule. The USDA's Smart Snacks final rule changed the canned vegetables exemption from "Canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or that contain no added ingredients except a small amount of sugar for processing purposes to maintain the quality and structure of the vegetable" to "Low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards." The restriction on nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes) is consistent with the committee's previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting calories, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Calories" in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Fruits and vegetables that meet all CNS requirements may be served in a portion size that does not exceed 200 calories. Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the calorie content of brand-specific products.
- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the calorie standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	<p>The following fruit and vegetable products are exempt from the fat standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>• canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>• low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats.</li> </ul> <p>All other fruit and vegetable products are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards.</p>

## Rationale

The CNS total fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The restriction on nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes) is consistent with the committee’s previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, and is stricter than Smart Snacks.

For school year 2017-18, the state nutrition standards committee updated the exemption for canned vegetables to be consistent with the Smart Snacks final rule. The USDA’s Smart Snacks final rule changed the canned vegetables exemption from “Canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or that contain no added ingredients except a small amount of sugar for processing purposes to maintain the quality and structure of the vegetable” to “Low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.” For information on the rationale for limiting fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Total Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee kept the previous standard prohibiting artificial fat replacers because it is stricter than Smart Snacks and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1.



**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any fruit or vegetable products containing added chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

## Implementation guidance

- Purchase and prepare fruits and vegetables without added fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- If fruits or vegetables contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to the trans fats standard in this section and “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- Avoid fried or baked pre-fried vegetables, such as french fries, potato puffs, and hash brown patties.
- If accompaniments (e.g., condiments) are used, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that fruits and vegetables do not contain chemically altered fat substitutes. For more information, refer to “chemically altered fat substitutes” in the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the total fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	<p>The following fruit and vegetable products are exempt from the saturated fat standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats.</li> </ul> <p>All other fruit and vegetable products are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards.</p>

### Rationale

The CNS saturated fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. The restriction on nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes) is consistent with the committee’s previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, and is stricter than Smart Snacks.



For school year 2017-18, the state nutrition standards committee updated the exemption for canned vegetables to be consistent with the Smart Snacks final rule. The USDA’s Smart Snacks final rule changed the canned vegetables exemption from “Canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or that contain no added ingredients except a small amount of sugar for processing purposes to maintain the quality and structure of the vegetable” to “Low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.” For information on the rationale for limiting saturated fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Saturated Fat” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Purchase and prepare fruits and vegetables without added saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the saturated fat content of brand-specific products.
- If fruits or vegetables contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to the trans fat standard in this section and “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. For information on the rationale for eliminating trans fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Trans Fat” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement and select products without partially hydrogenated oils. The Better Choice Recommendations on the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage indicate foods without partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to “[Better Choice Recommendations](#)” in section 1.
- Effective July 1, 2015, all entree products must be completely trans fat free, i.e., the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils. Read the ingredients statement to identify whether a product contains partially hydrogenated oils.
- Purchase and prepare fruits and vegetables without added fat. If fruits or vegetables contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for vegetables. Eliminate added sources of trans fat when cooking, such as vegetable shortening and margarines that contain partially hydrogenated oils. For more information on lowering fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.</li> </ul>	<p>The following fruit and vegetable products are exempt from the sugars standard, but cannot contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>dried whole fruits or vegetables, dried whole fruit or vegetable pieces, and dehydrated fruits or vegetables, all without added sweeteners (including artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols).</li> </ul> <p>All other fruit and vegetable products are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards.</p>

## Rationale

The CNS sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting added sugars, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sugars” in [section 3](#).

The naturally occurring sugars in fruits and vegetables are not a health concern, due to the rich nutrient content of these foods. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends increasing intake of whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried), within appropriate daily calorie levels.

The CNS includes an exemption for canned fruits packed in extra light syrup or light syrup, to be consistent with Smart Snacks. The restriction on nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes) is consistent with the committee’s previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, and is stricter than Smart Snacks.

## Implementation guidance

- If processed fruits and vegetables are served, choose products that are lowest in sugars. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sugar content of brand-specific products.
- Read labels for processed fruits and choose those without added sugars. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of “added sugars,” refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Serve canned fruits in their natural juices or water instead of light syrup.
- Serve dried fruits and vegetables without added sugars or sweeteners. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3.
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugar standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	<p>The following fruit and vegetable products are exempt from the sodium standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water;</li> <li>canned fruits with no added ingredients except water or that are packed in 100 percent juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup, all without added artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols or fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes); and</li> <li>low sodium/no salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.</li> </ul> <p>All other fruit and vegetable products are not exempt and must meet all nutrient standards.</p>

### Rationale

The CNS sodium standard for fruits and vegetables is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting sodium, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sodium” in [section 3](#).

The CNS includes an exemption for canned fruits packed in extra light syrup or light syrup, to be consistent with Smart Snacks. The restriction on nonnutritive sweeteners, sugar alcohols, and fats (including chemically altered fat substitutes) is consistent with the committee’s previous approach to nonnutritive sweeteners, and sugar alcohols, and is stricter than Smart Snacks.

### Implementation guidance

- Choose fruits and vegetables that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sodium content of brand-specific products.
- Serve fresh vegetables and fruits (whole or cut up) whenever possible.
- If canned vegetables are served, choose low-sodium varieties.



- Entities that sell fruits and vegetables prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS caffeine standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting caffeine, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Caffeine" in [section 3](#).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any fruit or vegetable products containing added caffeine. However, the committee kept the previous standard prohibiting caffeine to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for processed fruits and vegetables to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.
- Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the standards for fruits and vegetables.



## 7 — Standards for Cooked Grains

This category includes all cooked grains such as rice, pasta, and quinoa, except for cooked breakfast cereals like oatmeal, which are in the snacks category (refer to [section 3](#)). These standards apply to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as butter, oil, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and salad dressing. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.



### Whole Grain-Rich Criteria

All cooked grains must meet the WGR criteria under general standard 1. They must contain at least 50 percent whole grains by weight or have a whole grain as the first ingredient. Any remaining grain ingredients must be enriched. If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be a whole grain. For more information, refer to “General Standards” in section 2.

Products that contain any noncreditable grains at levels of more than two percent of the product formula ( $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce equivalent) do not meet this standard. Examples of noncreditable grain ingredients include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, bran, germ, and modified food starch including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours. For additional guidance on noncreditable grains, review the CSDE’s guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

The weight limit for noncreditable grains depends on the type of grain product, based on the groups in the USDA’s ounce equivalents chart. The ounce equivalents are summarized in the CSDE’s resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.

- To meet the whole grain-rich criteria of the CNS, products in groups A-G (baked goods) of the USDA ounce equivalents chart must contain 3.99 grams or less of noncreditable grains in the food item as served. Examples of products in groups A-G include crackers, pretzels, breads, bagels, pancakes, waffles, French toast, muffins, cookies, cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, coffee cake, and cake.
- To meet the whole grain-rich criteria of the CNS, products in group H (cereal grains) of the USDA ounce equivalents chart must contain 6.99 grams or less of noncreditable grains in the food item as served. Examples of products in this group include pasta, rice, barley, cooked breakfast cereals, bulgur or cracked wheat, and cereal grains such as amaranth, buckwheat, cornmeal, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

The CSDE’s guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*, provides detailed guidance on how to determine if a food is WGR. For more information, refer to “Rationale” and “Implementation Guidance” for general standard 1 in [section 2](#).

## Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS sodium standard for grains has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting calories, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Calories” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Cooked grains that meet all requirements of the CNS may be served in a portion size that does not exceed 200 calories. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the calorie content of brand-specific products.
- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the calorie standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS total fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Total Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee kept the previous standard prohibiting artificial fat replacers because it is stricter than Smart Snacks, and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1.

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any cooked grain products containing added chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Purchase cooked grains that are lower in fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for cooked grains made from scratch. For more information on reducing fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, *[Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#)*.
- If cooked grains contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- If accompaniments (e.g., condiments) are used, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.

- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that cooked grains do not contain chemically altered fat substitutes. For more information, refer to “chemically altered fat substitutes” in the Glossary.
- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the total fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS saturated fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting saturated fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Saturated Fat” in [section 3](#)

### Implementation guidance

- Purchase cooked grains that are lower in saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- Use low-fat cooking techniques for cooked grains made from scratch. For more information on reducing saturated fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- If cooked grains contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- If accompaniments (e.g., condiments) are used, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.

- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. For information on the rationale for eliminating trans fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Trans Fat" in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- All foods must be completely trans fat free, i.e., the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils. Read the ingredients statement to identify whether a product contains partially hydrogenated oils.
- Purchase and prepare cooked grains without added fat. If cooked grains contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to "polyunsaturated" and "monounsaturated fats" in the [Glossary](#).

## 7 | Cooked Grains

- Use low-fat cooking techniques for cooked grains. Eliminate added sources of trans fat when cooking such as vegetable shortening and margarines that contain partially hydrogenated oils. For more information on reducing fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

### Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight and no more than 15 grams of total sugars as served, including any added accompaniments.</li><li>• No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.</li></ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. The standard includes gram limits in addition to “percent by weight,” because “percent by weight” alone does not provide any appreciable restriction of sugar content for dense foods like cooked grains.

Using only the USDA’s “percent by weight” standard would weaken the integrity of the CNS. For example, using 35 percent by weight, a ½-cup serving of brown rice with sweet and sour sauce that weighs 3 ounces could contain up to 29.8 grams (almost 2 ½ tablespoons) of total sugars. This is almost twice the amount of sugars allowed by the CNS limit of no more than 15 grams. Since cooked grains are typically low in added sugars, most products will not reach these levels. However, the committee kept the standard of “no more than 15 grams” to ensure that high-sugar cooked grain products are not used.

Cooked grains are generally served by volume (e.g., ½ cup) not weight (e.g., 3 ounces). This makes the “percent by weight” calculation difficult unless the menu planner can determine the equivalent weight of the actual serving size, e.g., the weight of ½ cup of cooked rice. The weight of a serving of cooked grains varies depending on many factors such as the ingredients used, cooking method, cooking time and type of food, e.g., brown rice, long-grain white rice or short-grain white rice, and whole-wheat or enriched pasta. Recipes generally express the serving size for cooked grains as volume not weight. For more information, refer to “[Volume versus Weight](#)” in section 2.

The committee kept the previous standard prohibiting nonnutritive sweeteners (artificial and natural) and sugar alcohols because it is stricter than Smart Snacks and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1. For information on the rationale for limiting sugars, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sugars” in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Cooked grains prepared without added sugars will meet the sugars standard. Cooked grains are naturally low in total sugars unless sugars are added.
- Serve unprocessed 100 percent whole-grain products most often such as whole-wheat pasta and whole-grain brown rice. Many WGR products are not 100 percent whole grain. For more information, on choosing whole-grain products, refer to section 2 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- If purchasing processed products, choose cooked grains that are lowest in sugars. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- Read labels and choose foods without added sugars. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of “added sugars,” refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).



- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS sodium standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is the same as Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting sodium, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Sodium" in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Choose cooked grains that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- Prepare cooked grains with no or minimal sodium. For more information on reducing sodium, review section 6 of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- Use salt-free seasonings such as herbs and spices.
- Eliminate saltshakers and salt packets from the serving line.
- Provide low-sodium alternatives to condiments, dressings and sauces. For more information, refer to "[Accompaniments](#)" in section 2
- Entities that sell cooked grains prepared or packaged with added ingredients (e.g., fat, sugar, and sodium) must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS





food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS caffeine standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting caffeine, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Caffeine” in [section 3](#).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any cooked grain products containing added caffeine. However, the committee kept the previous standard prohibiting caffeine to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

## Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for cooked grains to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.
- Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the standards for cooked grains.





## 8 — Standards for Soups

This category includes all soups including ready-to-serve, canned, frozen, and rehydrated. The standards apply to the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments such as sour cream, grated cheese, or croutons. For more examples of accompaniments, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.

### Calories

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS calorie standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting calories, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Calories” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- If soups meet all requirements of the CNS, they may be served in a portion size that does not exceed 200 calories. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the calorie content of brand-specific products.
- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Total Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 35 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>No chemically altered fat substitutes.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS total fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Total Fat” in [section 3](#).

The state nutrition standards committee kept the previous standard prohibiting artificial fat replacers because it is stricter than Smart Snacks and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1.

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any soup products containing added chemically altered fat substitutes. However, the committee kept the previous standard to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Choose commercial soups that are lowest in fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the fat content of brand-specific products.
- Prepare soups made from scratch with minimal or no added fat. If fat is used, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to the trans fats standard in this section and “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#). For more information on reducing fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- When preparing milk-based soups, use low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk instead of whole or reduced-fat (2%) milk.
- If accompaniments (e.g., condiments) are used, serve low-fat versions in individual portion sizes. For more information, refer to “[Accompaniments](#)” in section 2.

- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that soups do not contain chemically altered fat substitutes. For more information, refer to “chemically altered fat substitutes” in the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the total fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Saturated Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 10 percent of calories as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS saturated fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting saturated fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Saturated Fat” in [section 3](#).

### Implementation guidance

- Choose commercial soups that are lowest in saturated fat. Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the saturated fat content of brand-specific products.
- Prepare soups made from scratch with minimal or no added fat. If fat is used, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to “Trans Fat” in this section and “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#). For more information on reducing fat, review section 6 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- When preparing milk-based soups, use low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk instead of whole or reduced-fat (2%) milk.

- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the saturated fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Trans Fat

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero trans fat (less than 0.5 gram) as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>All foods must be 100 percent trans fat free, including any added accompaniments. Labels must indicate zero trans fat as served, and the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS trans fat standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. Effective with school year 2015-16 (July 1, 2015), the state nutrition standards committee adopted a stricter standard because the federal standard does not eliminate partially hydrogenated oils. For information on the rationale for eliminating trans fat, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Trans Fat" in [section 3](#).

## Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement and select products without partially hydrogenated oils. The Better Choice Recommendations on the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage indicate foods without partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to "[Better Choice Recommendations](#)" in section 1.
- Effective July 1, 2015, the CNS required all products to be trans fat free, i.e., the ingredients statement cannot contain any partially hydrogenated oils. Read the ingredients statement to identify whether a product contains partially hydrogenated oils.

- Purchase and prepare soups without added fat. If soups contain added fat, choose products with healthy unsaturated fats (such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats) and no partially hydrogenated oils. For more information, refer to “polyunsaturated” and “monounsaturated fats” in the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the trans fat standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Sugars

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than 35 percent of total sugars by weight and no more than 15 grams of total sugars as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> <li>• No artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols.</li> </ul>	None

## Rationale

The CNS sugar standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. The standard includes gram limits in addition to “percent by weight,” because “percent by weight” cannot be applied to foods whose serving size is based on volume (fluid ounces) instead of weight (ounces). “Percent of sugars by weight” cannot be easily determined because commercially prepared soups and recipes for soups made from scratch do not provide information on the weight of a serving. For more information, refer to “[Volume versus weight](#)” in section 2.

Even if serving weight information is available, using only the USDA’s “percent by weight” standard would weaken the integrity of the previous CNS. “Percent of sugars by weight” allows a high amount of sugars for dense foods such as soups. Since soups are typically low in added sugars, most products will not reach these levels. However, the committee kept the standard of “no more than 15 grams of total sugars” to ensure that any high-sugar soup products are not used.

The committee kept the previous standard prohibiting nonnutritive sweeteners (artificial and natural) and sugar alcohols because it is stricter than Smart Snacks and supports the philosophy of the CNS. For more information, refer to “[CNS Philosophy](#)” in section 1. For information on the rationale for limiting sugars, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Sugars” in [section 3](#).



### Implementation guidance

- Read labels and choose foods without added sugars. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of “added sugars,” refer to the [Glossary](#)
- Read the ingredients statement to ensure that foods do not contain artificial sweeteners, nonnutritive sweeteners, or sugar alcohols. For more information, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3. For the definition of these ingredients, refer to the [Glossary](#).
- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe’s serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sugars standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to “[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)” in section 1. For the definition of “foods made from scratch,” refer to the [Glossary](#).



## Sodium

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 200 milligrams as served, including any added accompaniments.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The USDA's Smart Snacks standards decreased from 230 milligrams to 200 milligrams, effective July 1, 2016. Effective July 1, 2016, the state nutrition standards committee added the USDA's sodium standard to the soups category to be consistent with Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting sodium, refer to the previously indicated rationale under "Sodium" in [section 3](#).

The committee recognizes that these sodium limits are very restrictive when applied to the soups category because they eliminate most commercial soups currently available.

### Implementation guidance

- Choose soups that are lowest in sodium. Consult the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for the sodium content of brand-specific products.
- Prepare soups from scratch to control sodium content. Use salt-free seasonings, such as herbs and spices. For more information on reducing sodium, review section 6 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- If soup bases are used, purchase low-sodium varieties.
- Entities that sell soups made from scratch must ensure that the recipe's serving (including any added accompaniments) meets the sodium standard. Required documentation includes 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniments) complies with the CNS. For more information, refer to "[Evaluating foods made from scratch](#)" in section 1. For the definition of "foods made from scratch," refer to the [Glossary](#).

## Caffeine

Nutrient standard	Exemptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No caffeine, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.</li> </ul>	None

### Rationale

The CNS caffeine standard has not changed since the last update of the CNS, and is stricter than Smart Snacks. For information on the rationale for limiting caffeine, refer to the previously indicated rationale under “Caffeine” in [section 3](#).

**Note:** To date, the CSDE is not aware of any soup products containing added caffeine. However, the committee kept the previous standard prohibiting caffeine to prevent the future use of any commercial products developed with these ingredients.

### Implementation guidance

- Read the ingredients statement for soups to ensure that products do not contain added caffeine.
- Consult the CSDE’s [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage for brand-specific products that meet the standards for soups.

## 9 — Resources

This section summarizes the CSDE’s webpages and resources to assist schools with implementing the CNS of HFC (Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes), and the state beverage requirements (Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes). For more implementation resources, review the CSDE’s resource list, *Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools*.

### Adult Education

Requirements for Selling Foods and Beverages in Adult Education Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/AdultEdHFC.pdf>

### Beverages

Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Allowable\\_Beverages\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Allowable_Beverages_Public_Schools.pdf)

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/MilkSubstitutesSNP.pdf>

Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Beverage-Requirements>

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food\\_Beverage\\_Exemptions\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food_Beverage_Exemptions_Public_Schools.pdf)

Presentation: Beverage Requirements for Connecticut Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Beverage\\_Requirements\\_Connecticut\\_Public\\_Schools\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Beverage_Requirements_Connecticut_Public_Schools_Presentation.pdf)

Requirements for Beverages Containing Water and Juice (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Water\\_Juice\\_Beverages\\_Requirements.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Water_Juice_Beverages_Requirements.pdf)

## Celebrations

Healthy Celebrations (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/HealthyCelebrations.pdf>

“Celebrations” section of the CSDE’s Resource List for Wellness Policies in Schools and Child Care (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesWellnessPolicy.pdf>

## Competitive Foods

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Competitive-Foods>

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 11-14: Overview of Federal versus State Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2014/OM11-14.pdf>

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2018/OM01-18.pdf>

Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive\\_Foods\\_Guide\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive_Foods_Guide_HFC.pdf)

Overview of Connecticut Competitive Foods Regulations (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Overview\\_CT\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_Regulations.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Overview_CT_Competitive_Foods_Regulations.pdf)

Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Overview\\_Federal\\_State\\_Laws\\_Competitive\\_Foods.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Overview_Federal_State_Laws_Competitive_Foods.pdf)

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions\\_Answers\\_Connecticut\\_Statutes\\_School\\_Foods\\_Beverages.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions_Answers_Connecticut_Statutes_School_Foods_Beverages.pdf)

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (Sections 10-215b-1 and 10-215b-23):

[https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/Browse/RCSA/Title\\_10Subtitle\\_10-215b/](https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/Browse/RCSA/Title_10Subtitle_10-215b/)

Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements_Competitive_Foods_HFC.pdf)

Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Summary\\_Chart\\_Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Summary_Chart_Requirements_Competitive_Foods_HFC.pdf).

## Connecticut General Statutes

C.G.S. Section 10-215. Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees:

[https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_169.htm#sec\\_10-215](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215)

C.G.S. Section 10-215a. Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_169.htm#sec\\_10-215a](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215a)

C.G.S. Section 10-215e. Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_169.htm#sec\\_10-215e](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215e)

C.G.S. Section 10-215f. Certification that food meets nutrition standards: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_169.htm#sec\\_10-215f](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_169.htm#sec_10-215f)

C.G.S. Section 10-221o. Lunch Periods and Recess: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_170.htm#sec\\_10-221o](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-221o)

C.G.S. Section 10-221p. Boards to make available for purchase nutritious and low-fat foods: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_170.htm#sec\\_10-221p](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-221p)

C.G.S. Section 10-221q. Sale of beverages: [https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap\\_170.htm#sec\\_10-221q](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-221q)

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE): [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions\\_Answers\\_Connecticut\\_Statutes\\_School\\_Foods\\_Beverages.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions_Answers_Connecticut_Statutes_School_Foods_Beverages.pdf)

## Connecticut Nutrition Standards

Comparison of the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and the USDA's Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Comparison\\_Chart\\_Connecticut\\_Nutrition\\_Standards\\_and\\_Smart\\_Snacks.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Comparison_Chart_Connecticut_Nutrition_Standards_and_Smart_Snacks.pdf)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut\\_Nutrition\\_Standards\\_full\\_document.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut_Nutrition_Standards_full_document.pdf)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Summary (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNSConnecticut\\_Nutrition\\_Standards\\_Summary.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNSConnecticut_Nutrition_Standards_Summary.pdf)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 1: Snacks (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet1\\_Snacks.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet1_Snacks.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 10: Evaluating Recipes for Sugars (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet10\\_Evaluate\\_Recipes\\_Sugars.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet10_Evaluate_Recipes_Sugars.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 2: Yogurt and Pudding (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet2\\_Yogurt\\_Pudding.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet2_Yogurt_Pudding.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 3: Smoothies (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet3\\_Smoothies.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet3_Smoothies.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 4: Fruits and Vegetables (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet4\\_Fruits\\_Vegetables.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet4_Fruits_Vegetables.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 5: Soups (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet5\\_Soups.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet5_Soups.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 6: Cooked Grains (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet6\\_Cooked\\_Grains.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet6_Cooked_Grains.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 7: Entrees (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet7\\_Entrees.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet7_Entrees.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 8: Non-entree Combination Foods (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet8\\_Nonentree\\_Combination\\_Food.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet8_Nonentree_Combination_Food.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheet 9: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet9\\_Nutrient\\_Analysis\\_Recipes.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet9_Nutrient_Analysis_Recipes.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards Worksheets (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/How-To#CNSWorksheets>

Evaluating Foods for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/How-To>

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food\\_Beverage\\_Exemptions\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food_Beverage_Exemptions_Public_Schools.pdf)

Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluating\\_Recipes\\_CNS\\_Compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluating_Recipes_CNS_Compliance.pdf)

How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate\\_Scratch\\_Foods\\_CNS\\_Compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate_Scratch_Foods_CNS_Compliance.pdf)

How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the CNS (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate\\_Purchased\\_Foods\\_CNS.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate_Purchased_Foods_CNS.pdf)

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGRRequirementSNPgradesK-12.pdf>

Presentation: Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut\\_Nutrition\\_Standards\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut_Nutrition_Standards_Presentation.pdf)

Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions\\_Answers\\_Connecticut\\_Statutes\\_School\\_Foods\\_Beverages.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions_Answers_Connecticut_Statutes_School_Foods_Beverages.pdf)

## Culinary Programs

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 31-14: Federal and State Requirements for Culinary Education Programs: Smart Snacks versus Connecticut Nutrition Standards:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2014/OM31-14.pdf>

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Culinary Programs in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Culinary\\_Programs\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Culinary_Programs_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

## Food Rewards

Alternatives to Food Rewards (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/FoodRewards.pdf>

“Alternatives to Food Rewards” section of the CSDE’s Resource List for Wellness Policies in Schools and Child Care (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesWellnessPolicy.pdf>

## Fundraisers

Healthy Fundraising (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/HealthyFundraising.pdf>

Presentation: Healthy Food Certification Fundraiser Requirements **(CSDE)**:

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser\\_Requirements\\_HFC\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser_Requirements_HFC_Presentation.pdf)

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser\\_Requirements\\_NonHFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser_Requirements_NonHFC.pdf)

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser\\_Requirements\\_Private\\_RCCI.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser_Requirements_Private_RCCI.pdf)

Sample Fundraiser Form for HFC (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Sample\\_Fundraiser\\_Form\\_HFC.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Sample_Fundraiser_Form_HFC.docx)

“School Fundraisers” section of the CSDE’s Resource List for Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesCompetitiveFoods.pdf>



## Healthy Food Certification (HFC)

### Application

CSDE: Operational Memorandum: Process for Submitting the Annual HFC Statement:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification/Apply#Instructions>

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food\\_Beverage\\_Exemptions\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food_Beverage_Exemptions_Public_Schools.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification Application (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification/Apply>

Presentation Application Procedures for HFC (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/App/Application\\_Procedures\\_HFC\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/App/Application_Procedures_HFC_Presentation.pdf)

Responsibilities of HFC District Contact Person (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/HFC\\_District\\_Contact\\_Responsibilities.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/HFC_District_Contact_Responsibilities.pdf)

Submitting Connecticut's Healthy Food Certification Statement (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/App/Instructions\\_Submitting\\_Connecticut\\_Healthy\\_Food\\_Certification\\_Statement.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/App/Instructions_Submitting_Connecticut_Healthy_Food_Certification_Statement.pdf)

### Documentation

Completing the Online Healthy Food Certification Compliance Form (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Completing\\_Online\\_HFC\\_Compliance\\_Form.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Completing_Online_HFC_Compliance_Form.pdf)

Districts Required to Submit Food and Beverage Lists (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Districts\\_Required\\_to\\_Submit\\_Lists\\_Foods\\_Beverages\\_HFC\\_Documentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Districts_Required_to_Submit_Lists_Foods_Beverages_HFC_Documentation.pdf)

Ensuring District Compliance with Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/EnsureHFC.pdf>

Guidance for Healthy Food Certification Documentation (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Guidance\\_Healthy\\_Food\\_Certification\\_Documentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Guidance_Healthy_Food_Certification_Documentation.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification Documentation (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification/Documents>

Presentation: Documentation Requirements for Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Documentation\\_Requirements\\_HFC\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Doc/Documentation_Requirements_HFC_Presentation.pdf)

### Requirements

Ensuring District Compliance with Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Ensuring\\_District\\_Compliance\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Ensuring_District_Compliance_HFC.pdf)

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food\\_Beverage\\_Exemptions\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food_Beverage_Exemptions_Public_Schools.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>

Presentation: Complying with Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Complying\\_Healthy\\_Food\\_Certification\\_Presentation.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Complying_Healthy_Food_Certification_Presentation.pdf)

Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements_Competitive_Foods_HFC.pdf)

Responsibilities of District Contact Person for Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/HFC\\_District\\_Contact\\_Responsibilities.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/HFC_District_Contact_Responsibilities.pdf)

### List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages

Contact Information for Vendors Selling Foods and Beverages Listed on the Connecticut State Department of Education's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Contact\\_Information\\_Vendors\\_Acceptable\\_Foods\\_Beverages.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Contact_Information_Vendors_Acceptable_Foods_Beverages.pdf)

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/List-of-Acceptable-Foods-and-Beverages>

*Submitting Food and Beverage Products for Approval* (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Submitting\\_Food\\_Beverage\\_Products.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Submitting_Food_Beverage_Products.pdf)

Summary of Updates (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Submitting\\_Food\\_Beverage\\_Products.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/FBlist/Submitting_Food_Beverage_Products.pdf)

## Meal Patterns and Menu Planning

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASPHandbook.pdf>

ASP Meal Pattern for Grades K-12:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/MealPatternASPgradesK-12.pdf>

ASP Meal Pattern for Preschoolers (Ages 1-4):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/MealPatternASPpreschool.pdf>

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ComparisonPreschoolGradesK-12ASP.pdf>

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/ComparisonPreschoolGradesK-12SNP.pdf>

Crediting Foods for Preschool Meals in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents>

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (Grades K-12) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschool Meals in the NSLP and SBP:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12:

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesMenuPlanning.pdf>

### School Stores

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/School\\_Store\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/School_Store_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

“School Stores” section of the CSDE’s Resource List for Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesCompetitiveFoods.pdf>

### School Wellness Policies

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/CCPolicy/CCAG.pdf>

Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWP/Action\\_Guide.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWP/Action_Guide.pdf)

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs/Documents>

School Wellness Policies (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Wellness-Policies>

### Vending Machines

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 1-18: Accrual of Income from Sales of Competitive Foods in Schools:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2018/OM01-18.pdf>

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Vending\\_Machine\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Vending_Machine_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

## Glossary

**a la carte sales:** Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA’s school nutrition programs. A la carte items include, but are not limited to, foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria serving lines, a la carte lines, kiosks, vending machines, school stores, and snack bars located anywhere on school grounds. For more information, see “competitive foods” in this section.

**accompaniments:** Foods that accompany another food or beverage item, such as butter, cream cheese, syrup, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and salad dressing. Foods must be evaluated for compliance with the CNS based on the amount of the food item as served including any added accompaniments. Examples include hamburger with ketchup and mustard, bagel with cream cheese, waffles with syrup, whole grain-rich pasta with butter, salad with dressing, and fruit crisp with whipped cream. For more examples, refer to [table 2-1](#) in section 2.

**added sugars:** Sugars and syrups added to foods in processing or preparation, as opposed to the naturally occurring sugars found in foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy products. Examples of added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup.

**artificial sweeteners:** Ingredients without calories that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Artificial sweeteners are hundreds of times sweeter than sugar. Common artificial sweeteners include acesulfame potassium (Acesulfame-K, Sunett, Sweet & Safe, Sweet One), aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal), neotame, saccharin (Sweet and Low, Sweet Twin, Sweet ‘N Low Brown, Necta Sweet), sucralose (Splenda), and tagatose. These nonnutritive sweeteners are calorie-free, except for aspartame, which is very low in calories. For more information, see “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section. For a list of artificial sweeteners, refer to [table 3-2](#) in section 3.

**carbohydrates:** A category of nutrients that includes sugars (simple carbohydrates) and starch and fiber (complex carbohydrates). Foods in the basic food groups that provide carbohydrates — fruits, vegetables, breads, cereals, grains, milk and dairy products — are important sources of many nutrients. However, foods containing large amounts of added sugars provide calories but few, if any, nutrients. Carbohydrates are easily converted by the body to energy (calories). The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend consuming 45 to 65 percent of total daily calories from carbohydrates, especially complex carbohydrates. For more information, see “added sugars,” “simple carbohydrates” and “complex carbohydrates” in this section.

**cheese:** See “natural cheese” and “pasteurized blended cheese” in this section.

**chemically altered fat substitutes:** Compounds made by chemically manipulating food products to mimic the texture and flavor of fat while providing fewer calories and less metabolizable fat. Examples include Olestra, Olean, and Simplese. Fat substitutes can have negative side effects. The Connecticut Nutrition Standards do not allow foods or beverages with these ingredients.

**Child Nutrition (CN) label:** A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labeling include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. The CN label will also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#), and visit the USDA’s [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling](#) webpage.

**Child Nutrition Programs:** The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

**cholesterol:** A fat-like substance that performs important functions in the body such as making cell membranes and some hormones. There are two different types of cholesterol. *Blood (serum) cholesterol* circulates in the body in lipoproteins, such as low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and high-density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL is known as “bad” cholesterol because high levels can clog arteries, causing atherosclerosis. A high level of serum cholesterol is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, which leads to heart attack. HDL is known as “good” cholesterol because high levels seem to protect against heart attack. *Dietary cholesterol* does not contain any calories. It comes from foods of animal origin, including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. Plant foods (including vegetable oils) do not contain cholesterol. There is no dietary requirement for cholesterol because the body can make all it needs.

**combination foods:** Foods that contain more than one food component such as pizza, burritos, vegetable egg rolls and smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains) and cheese (meat/meat alternate). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza or a burrito) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich). Some combination foods are not entree items as defined by the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.

**competitive foods** (*applies to state statutes and state competitive foods regulations*): All foods and beverages available for sale to students on school premises at all times, other than reimbursable meals and snacks served through the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Potential sources of competitive foods include, but are not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers. For other potential sources of food sales, refer to [table 1-1](#) in section 1. For more information, see “a la carte sales” in this section. **Note:** Under Section 10-215b-1 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, competitive foods also include certain foods and beverages that are given to students while CNPs are operating.

**complex carbohydrates (starch and fiber):** Complex carbohydrates include starch and fiber, which are made from three or more simple sugars linked together. Starch is the storage form of energy in plants and provides calories. Fiber is the structural framework of plants and does not contain any calories. Food sources of complex carbohydrates include legumes, starchy vegetables (e.g., potatoes, corn, dry beans and green peas), whole-grain breads and cereals, and nuts and seeds. For more information, see “dietary fiber” in this section.

**Connecticut Nutrition Standards:** State nutrition standards developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education, as required by [Section 10-215e](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes. The CNS addresses the nutritional content of all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals. The standards limit calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars; eliminate trans fat; and promote more nutrient-rich foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, legumes, and lean meats. All schools in any district that chooses to comply with the healthy food option of HFC under Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes must follow the CNS for all sources of food sales to students, including school cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources. The CNS also applies to snacks served in the Afterschool Snack Program. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) webpage.

**Daily Value:** A number on the Nutrition Facts panel of food labels that provides recommendations for daily intake of nutrients based on daily caloric intakes of 2,000 and 2,500 calories. The Nutrition Facts panel also includes percent Daily Value, which shows how a serving of the food fits into an overall daily diet of 2,000 calories.

**dietary fiber:** Nondigestible carbohydrates and lignin (a noncarbohydrate substance bound to fiber) that are naturally occurring in plants, e.g., gums, cellulose, fiber in oats and wheat bran. Fiber improves gastrointestinal health and reduces risk of several chronic diseases, such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes and colon cancer. There are two types of dietary fiber, insoluble and soluble. *Insoluble fibers* aid in digestion by adding bulk and softness to stools to promote regularity and prevent constipation. Insoluble fibers decrease the amount of “transit time” for food waste in the intestine. Insoluble fibers include whole-wheat products, wheat and corn bran, many vegetables (e.g., cauliflower, beans and potatoes) and the skins of fruits and root vegetables. *Soluble fibers* (e.g., gums, mucilages and pectin) bind to fatty substances in the body to promote their excretion as



waste. They help lower blood cholesterol levels and also help regulate the body's use of sugars. Soluble fibers are found in dry beans and peas, oats, oatmeal, barley, psyllium seed husk, and many fruits and vegetables, such as apples, carrots, citrus fruits, strawberries, prunes, dry beans, and other legumes.

**Dietary Guidelines for Americans:** A federal document that provides science-based advice for Americans ages 2 and older to promote health and to reduce risk for chronic diseases through diet and physical activity. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is published jointly every five years by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the USDA, and forms the basis of federal food, nutrition education and information programs. For more information, visit the [Dietary Guidelines](#) webpage.

**Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs):** A set of nutrient-based reference values that expand upon and replace the former Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) in the United States and the Recommended Nutrient Intakes (RNIs) in Canada. The DRIs include four reference values: Estimated Average Requirements (EARs), RDAs, Adequate Intakes (AIs) and Tolerable Upper Intake Levels (ULs).

**dietary specifications:** The USDA's nutrition standards for meals in the NSLP and SBP. The dietary specifications include weekly calorie ranges, zero trans fat and limits for saturated fat and sodium. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

**enriched grains:** Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and include thiamin (B<sub>1</sub>), riboflavin (B<sub>2</sub>), niacin (B<sub>3</sub>), folic acid, and iron. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).

**entrees:** The entrees category of the CNS includes three types of main dish food items: 1) a combination food of meat/meat alternate and whole grain-rich (WGR) food, e.g., breakfast egg sandwich on a whole-wheat English muffin, turkey wrap on whole-wheat tortilla, pizza with WGR crust, hamburger on a whole-grain bun, and bean burrito with whole-corn tortilla; 2) a combination food of vegetable/fruit and meat/meat alternate, e.g., chef's salad with turkey, cheese and hard-boiled egg; cheese and egg; fruit and cheese platter; yogurt and fruit parfaits; school-made yogurt and fruit smoothies; baked potato with chili; and chicken vegetable stir-fry; and 3) a meat/meat alternate alone (e.g., sausage patty, hard-boiled egg, grilled chicken), excluding yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, and meat snacks, e.g., jerky and meat sticks. Yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, and meat snacks must meet the nutrition standards for the snacks category.



**event:** An occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. Events involve a gathering of people in a social context, such as sports competitions, school concerts, and theatrical productions. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events, but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. For more information, refer to [table 1-2](#) in section 1.

**fat substitutes:** See “chemically altered fat substitutes” in this section.

**fiber:** A general term for the indigestible carbohydrates (e.g., pectin, cellulose, and other substances) that make up the framework of plants. Dietary fiber is the total amount of these materials that are not digested by humans. For more information, see “dietary fiber” in this section.

**foods made from scratch:** Two categories of foods, including 1) foods prepared from scratch using a recipe, e.g., entrees sold only a la carte (not as part of reimbursable NSLP and SBP meals), e.g., pizza, chef’s salad, and chicken nuggets; soups; cooked grains such as rice and pasta with added fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter) and salt; cooked vegetables with added fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter) and salt; salad with dressing; fruit smoothies; and baked goods such as muffins and cookies; and 2) foods that have additional ingredients added after purchasing, e.g., popping popcorn kernels in oil; assembling a sandwich; making muffins from a mix and adding butter and eggs; adding butter to rice and pasta; adding dressing to salad; and adding sprinkles to commercial frozen cookie dough. Before selling these two categories of foods to students, schools must provide documentation of each recipe’s CNS compliance. This requires 1) a standardized recipe with nutrition information per serving; and 2) the completed CSDE CNS worksheet for the applicable CNS food category, indicating that the serving (with added accompaniment) complies with the CNS. For more information, review the CSDE’s resources, [How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS](#) and [Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the CNS](#), and visit the “How To” section of the CSDE’s [CNS](#) webpage.

**fortification:** Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (e.g., fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body’s absorption of calcium), and to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., fortifying “energy” bars made from processed flour with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

**fundraisers:** Any activities conducted by any school-related or outside organization or group on school premises, during which money or its equivalent (e.g., coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items) is exchanged for the purchase of a product in support of the school or school-related activities. Fundraisers also include any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages, since funds may be raised as a result. **Note:** Smart Snacks applies to purchased coupons and similar items that can be exchanged for foods and beverages. The state statutes and state competitive foods regulations apply to all coupons and similar items that can be exchanged for foods and beverages, including tickets that students purchase and tickets given to students free of any charge.

**giving** (*applies to state statutes and state competitive foods regulations*): Providing foods and beverages to students free of any charge, contribution, or suggested donations. Foods and beverages are being given to students when all of the following five conditions apply: 1) students do not purchase foods and beverages; 2) students do not exchange purchased coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items for foods and beverages; 3) students are not given coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items that can be exchanged for foods and beverages; 4) programs and activities that charge a fee do not include the cost of foods and beverages provided to students; and 5) fundraisers do not give foods and beverages to students in exchange for a suggested donation.

**Healthy Food Certification:** A requirement of state statute (Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes) that each board of education or school governing authority for all public schools participating in the NSLP must certify annually to the CSDE whether they will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals. Districts that choose to comply with the CNS receive 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free, and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. For more information, see “Connecticut Nutrition Standards” in this section and visit the CSDE’s [Healthy Food Certification](#) webpage.

**hydrogenated oils:** Oils that have undergone hydrogenation, a chemical process that adds hydrogen and changes the structure of unsaturated fatty acids to increase shelf life and flavor stability. Hydrogenation turns oils that are liquid at room temperature into solids, e.g., shortening and margarine. Oils can be either completely or partially hydrogenated. Partial hydrogenation results in the formation of trans fat, a type of fat that increases the risk for cardiovascular disease. For more information, see “trans fat” in this section.

**meals:** See “reimbursable school meal” in this section.

**meat alternates:** Foods that provide similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, and commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a ¼-cup (2.2 ounces) serving. For more information, refer to section 2 of the CSDE’s publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

**monosaturated fat:** A type of unsaturated fat that is found in nuts, seeds, avocados and liquid vegetable oils, such as canola oil, olive oil, high oleic safflower, and sunflower oils. Monosaturated fats may help lower blood cholesterol when used as part of an overall diet that is moderate in fat.

**MyPlate:** Released in June 2011, MyPlate is the USDA’s food guidance system to translate the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* into a healthy eating plan. MyPlate emphasizes consuming more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy. For more information, visit the [Choose MyPlate](#) website.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) webpage.

**natural cheese:** Cheese that is produced directly from milk such as cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, muenster, provolone, Swiss, feta, and brie. Natural cheese also includes pasteurized blended cheese that is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese. Natural cheese does not include pasteurized process cheese (e.g., American), pasteurized process cheese food, pasteurized process cheese spread, or pasteurized process cheese products.

**non-entree combination foods:** Products that do not meet the definition of entree items but that contain two or more components representing two or more of the recommended food groups: fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein or grains. This category addresses nutrient-rich combination foods that are not entrees such as yogurt and fruit parfaits, peanut butter with carrot sticks, and hummus dip with vegetables. These foods either do not meet the main dish criteria for entrees or do not provide the minimum meal pattern requirements for meat/meat alternates and grains together or meat/meat alternates alone.

**nonnutritive sweeteners:** Ingredients without calories that are used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Nonnutritive sweeteners can be 200 to 600 times sweeter than sugar. They include artificial sweeteners such as acesulfame-potassium, neotame, saccharin, and sucralose, and “natural” sweeteners such as stevia (e.g., Rebiana, Rebaudioside A, Truvia, PureVia, and SweetLeaf). For a list of artificial sweeteners, see “artificial sweeteners” in this section.

**nutrient-dense foods:** Foods that provide substantial amounts of naturally occurring vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients with relatively few calories. Nutrient-dense foods include lean sources of protein and/or complex carbohydrates that are low in total fat and saturated fats. Examples include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy products, lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, and beans. Foods and beverages that are not nutrient dense provide calories from fat, added sugars and processed carbohydrates but relatively small amounts of nutrients (and sometimes none at all), unless they are fortified.

**nutrient-rich foods:** See “nutrient-dense foods” in this section.

**nutrition standards:** Guidelines for the nutritional content of foods and beverages that provide objective criteria for determining what can and cannot be offered, based on current nutrition science and national health recommendations. Nutrition standards help programs to increase healthy options and limit less healthy choices wherever foods and beverages are available. For more information, see “Connecticut Nutrition Standards” in this section.

**nutrition supplementation of products:** Addition of vitamins, minerals, amino acids (e.g., taurine, glutamine, lysine, arginine), extracts (e.g., green tea extract, gotu kola extract), and herbs or other botanicals (e.g., ginseng, ginkgo biloba) to a food or beverage. For many of these supplements, the efficacy and safety for consumption by children is not well known. Some nutrition supplements may have harmful side effects. The Connecticut Nutrition Standards do not allow foods or beverages with these ingredients.

**nutritive sweeteners:** Sugars and sweeteners that contain calories and are used to sweeten foods and beverages. Examples include brown rice syrup, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, dextrin, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, maple syrup, nectars (e.g., peach nectar, pear nectar), raw sugar, sorghum syrup, sucrose, and syrup. For more information, see “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates (sugars)” in this section.

**ounce equivalent:** The amount of food that meets the USDA serving size requirement for 1 ounce of lean meat/meat alternate or 1 ounce of grain in the meal patterns for the NSLP and the SBP.

**partially hydrogenated oils:** Oils that have been chemically altered to change their consistency from liquid to semi-solid, e.g., margarine. This process results in the formation of trans fat, a type of fat that increases the risk for cardiovascular disease. When products contain partially hydrogenated oils, they will be listed in the ingredients statement, e.g., partially hydrogenated cottonseed and partially hydrogenated soybean oil. For more information, see “trans fat” in this section.

**pasteurized blended cheese:** Pasteurized blended cheese is made by blending one or more different kinds of natural cheese into a homogenous mass. For more information, see “natural cheese” in this section.

**polyunsaturated fat:** A type of unsaturated fat that is found in fatty cold-water fish (e.g., salmon, mackerel and herring), nuts, seeds and liquid vegetable oils, such as safflower, sesame, soy, corn, and sunflower. Polyunsaturated fats may help lower blood cholesterol when used as part of an overall diet that is moderate in fat.

**portion:** See “serving size” in this section.

**product formulation statement:** An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how the product credits toward the USDA meal pattern requirements and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. Unlike a CN label, a product formulation statement does not provide any warranty against audit claims. If these foods will be used in a reimbursable meal, the SFA must check the manufacturer’s crediting information for accuracy. For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, *Product Formulation Statements*.

**public schools:** Connecticut public schools include all local and regional school districts, the regional educational service centers, the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) (previously known as the Connecticut Technical High School System), charter schools, interdistrict magnet schools, and endowed academies.

**Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA):** The average daily dietary intake level that is sufficient to meet the nutrient requirement of most healthy individuals in a particular life stage and gender group. The RDA is one of four reference values that comprise the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs). For more information, see definition for “Dietary Reference Intakes” in this section.

**refined grains:** Grains that have been processed to remove the bran and germ, making the product less nutritious than whole grains. Refined grains may or may not be enriched. For more information, see “enriched grains” in this section.

**reimbursable school meal:** A meal that meets the requirements of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program.

**sales** (*applies to state statutes and regulations*): The exchange of a determined amount of money or its equivalent (such as coupons, tickets, tokens, and similar items) for foods and beverages on school premises at any time. Sales also include fee-based programs and activities that include the cost of foods and beverages provided to students, and activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods and beverages. Potential sources of food and beverage sales in schools include cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and any other sources selling foods and beverages to students on school premises

**saturated fat:** A type of fat that raises blood cholesterol, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Major sources of saturated fat include animal products (e.g., cheese, beef, milk, oils, snack foods, butter, and lard) and tropical vegetable oils (palm, palm kernel, and coconut). For more information, see “solid fats” and “trans fats” in this section.

**School Breakfast Program (SBP):** The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Breakfast Program](#) webpage.

**school day:** The period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. For example, if school ends at 3:00 p.m., the school day is from midnight to 3:30 p.m. Summer school programs operated by the school governing authority are part of the regular school day.

**school food authority (SFA):** The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the USDA’s school nutrition programs, e.g., National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP, Special Milk Program, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

**school premises** (*applies to state statutes and state competitive foods regulations*): All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system (Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS)), or the governing authority district or school.

**Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP:** The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the meal patterns of the NSLP and SBP. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\) of the NSLP](#) webpage.

**serving size:** The weight, measure, or number of pieces or slices of a food, or volume of a beverage, provided to students. The individual serving size or package cannot exceed 480 calories for entrees or 200 calories for all other foods. All foods and beverages are evaluated for compliance with the CNS and Smart Snacks nutrition standards based on the amount of the food item as served, including any added accompaniments. For more information, see “accompaniments” in this section.

**simple carbohydrates (sugars):** Carbohydrates consisting of one (e.g., fructose and galactose) or two (e.g., lactose, maltose, sucrose) sugars. Sugars can be naturally present in foods (such as the fructose in fruit or the lactose in milk) or added to foods (such as sucrose or table sugar). Foods that naturally contain simple carbohydrates (such as fruits, milk and milk products and some vegetables) also contain vitamins and minerals. Foods that contain large amounts of added sugars (such as cookies, candy, pastries, sweetened baked goods, regular soft drinks and other sweetened drinks) provide calories with few, if any, nutrients. For more information, see “added sugars” in this section.



**Smart Snacks:** The USDA’s federal nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold to students on school campus during the school day, separately from reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Smart Snacks includes nutrition standards for entrees sold only a la carte, side dishes, and beverages. The USDA requires the Smart Snacks nutrition standards for all schools and institutions that participate in the NSLP and SBP. These standards were legislated by the final rule, *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the HHSFKA of 2010* (81 FR 50131), effective July 1, 2014. For more information, review the CSDE’s resources, *Summary of Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards* and *Questions and Answers on Smart Snacks*, and visit the CSDE’s [Smart Snacks](#) webpage. **Note:** For HFC public schools, Smart Snacks applies only to beverages. HFC public schools must disregard the Smart Snacks food standards because the stricter CNS requirements of the state HFC statute (C.G.S. Section 10-215f) supersede Smart Snacks.

**sodium:** A mineral that helps maintain the body’s fluid balance and blood pressure. Diets that are high in sodium can increase the risk of high blood pressure in individuals who are sodium sensitive.

**soft drinks** (*applies to state statutes and state competitive foods regulations*): Beverages (with or without carbonation) that contain water and/or juice and added sweeteners (including nutritive sweeteners and artificial or natural nonnutritive sweeteners), and may also contain other ingredients such as edible acids, natural or artificial flavors and colors, and added nutrients. Examples of soft drinks include soda (regular and diet), sports drinks (regular, low-calorie, and zero calorie), sweetened beverages (with or without carbonation) that are not 100 percent juice (such as lemonade and fruit punch drinks), and flavored water with added sweeteners

**solid fats:** Fats that are usually not liquid at room temperature. Solid fats are found in most animal foods but also can be made from vegetable oils through hydrogenation. Some common solid fats include butter, beef fat (tallow, suet), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), stick margarine, coconut oil, palm oil, and shortening. Foods high in solid fats include full-fat (regular) cheese, cream, whole milk, ice cream, well-marbled cuts of meats, regular ground beef, bacon, sausages, poultry skin, and many baked goods such as cookies, crackers, donuts, pastries, and croissants. Solid fats contain more saturated fat and/or trans fat. For more information, see “saturated fat” and “trans fat” in this section.

**standard of identity for food:** The mandatory government requirements that determine what a food product must contain to be marketed under a certain name in interstate commerce. These standards protect consumers by ensuring a label accurately reflects what is inside, e.g., mayonnaise is not an imitation spread, ice cream is not a similar, but different, frozen dessert. Standards for meat and poultry products are developed by the USDA. For other food products, standards are set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**standardized recipe:** A recipe that a given food service operation has tested and adapted for use. This recipe produces the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size.

**sucrose:** Another name for table sugar. Sucrose contains glucose and fructose. For more information, see “simple carbohydrates (sugars) in this section.

**sugar alcohols (polyols):** A type of carbohydrate used as sugar substitutes to sweeten foods and beverages. Sugar alcohols are incompletely absorbed and metabolized by the body, and contribute fewer calories than most sugars. They also perform other functions such as adding bulk and texture to foods. Common sugar alcohols include sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, maltitol, maltitol syrup, lactitol, erythritol, isomalt, and hydrogenated starch hydrolysates (HSH). Products with sugar alcohols are often labeled “sugar free.” Consuming large amounts of sugar alcohols may cause bloating, gas, or diarrhea. For more information, see “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section.

**sugars:** See “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates” in this section.

**sweeteners:** Ingredients used to sweeten foods and beverages. Sweeteners include nutritive sweeteners that contain calories, such as sugars and syrups, and nonnutritive sweeteners that do not contain calories, such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia. For more information, see “added sugars,” “artificial sweeteners” and “nonnutritive sweeteners” in this section.

**total sugars:** All sources of sugars including naturally occurring (e.g., fruits, vegetables and milk) and added (e.g., brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, and syrup). For more information, see “added sugars” and “simple carbohydrates” in this section.

**trans fat:** A type of saturated (solid) fat that increases the risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Like saturated fats, trans fats raise “bad” low-density lipoproteins (LDL) cholesterol. However, unlike saturated fats, they also decrease “good” high-density lipoproteins (HDL) cholesterol. Small amounts of trans fats occur naturally in some foods of animal origin, e.g., dairy products, beef and lamb. However, most trans fats in the American diet are artificially made as the result of “hydrogenation,” a process where liquid vegetable oils are made into a solid (saturated) fat. Trans fats are used by manufacturers to increase shelf life and enhance the flavor and texture of food products. They are found in processed foods made with partially hydrogenated oils such as cakes, cookies, crackers, snack chips, fried foods, and margarine. For more information, see “partially hydrogenated oils” in this section.



**whole foods:** Foods that are unprocessed or minimally processed and do not contain added ingredients, such as fat, sugars or sodium.

**whole fruits and vegetables:** Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

**whole grain-rich:** Whole grain-rich products must contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any other grain ingredients must be enriched and any noncreditable grains must be less than two percent ( $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce equivalent) of the product formula. To comply with this limit, the combined total of all noncreditable grains in one serving of the product cannot exceed 3.99 grams for groups A-G (baked goods) or 6.99 grams for groups H (cereal grains) and I (ready-to-eat breakfast cereals) of the USDA ounce equivalents chart. For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#), and section 2 of the CSDE's publication, [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

**whole grains:** Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the germ. All grains start out as whole grains, but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, review the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Whole Grains in the NSLP and SBP](#).

**whole-grain flour:** Flour made by grinding the entire whole-grain kernel, including the bran, germ, and endosperm. If a flour or meal does not contain all parts of the grain, it is not whole grain, e.g., degermed corn, milled rice, and wheat flour.







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